

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

DECEMBER 2023

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

For the period November to December 2023

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Finance

- Budgets -
 - The first draft of the base budget 2024-25 and forecast to 2027-28 has been produced, this currently forecasts a deficit of £1.8m in 2024-25 rising to £5m in 2027-28.
 - Discussions have taken place with CLT and MT to discuss the position, savings bid forms have been sent to budget holders for completion by the 15th December.
- Audits -
 - In line with the Internal Audit Plan, several audits are taking place within the section this quarter, Accounts Payable, Accounts Receivable, Income and Accountancy.
- Statement of Accounts -
 - Work continues to be undertaken on the production of the outstanding Statements of Accounts, however we are still waiting the decision from government as to the approach to be taken by external auditors.

Revenues

- Collection as of 30 November 2023 -
 - The monthly Council Tax collection was 73.18% against target of 73.00%. An excess in collection to target of £167k.
 - The monthly NDR collection was 75.25% against target of 73.80%. An excess in collection to target of £356k.
- Energy Schemes Update
 - 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).
- 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 have been reconciled and sent to government to

verify.

- Government Consultations
 - We have submitted a government consultation regarding the 'Taking control of goods regulations'.
- Storm Babet
 - We have received information from the Senior Flood Risk Officer, working for Community and Environmental Services at Norfolk County Council that we have nine properties flooded in North Norfolk between 20 – 25 October 2023.
- Year-End/Annual Billing
 - The 2024/25 year-end/annual billing kick off meeting has been held including Revenues, Benefits, System Admin, IT and Customer Services/Print Room. This meeting discussed the changes expected going forward and initial timings of test and live dates.

Estates

- Vacant properties –
 - Planning consent for the Seaview premises and the Former Tennis Courts leases have gained planning consent.
 - Existing and new concession opportunities have been assessed and are being marketed through the Autumn/Winter for new licences from April 2024.
- Leases -
 - Desk space for Flagship at the Cromer office has completed.
 - Rent review increase and lease renewals for approx. 300 chalet and beach huts is in progress. The recent weather conditions has caused some damage to beach huts at Sheringham.
 - Negotiations continue regarding a lease renewal to North Walsham Football Club.
 - Discussions are ongoing with Marrams bowls club, Cromer regarding repair works to the building.
- Disposals –
 - Enabling land at Sheringham, continues to progress through the option agreement process.
 - Sale of a small parcel of land at Wells-next-the-Sea is nearing completion.
- Acquisitions –
 - 1 residential property for the Housing Team has completed in North Walsham and further 3 are nearing completion.
- Rocket House, technical briefing and site meeting for Members took place in November.

Property Services

- The public conveniences and bridge at the Leas Sheringham has been closed due to structural failure. Works to refurbish the right-hand side of the public conveniences have been stopped until repairs are undertaken.

- The tender returns for the Art Deco building, Red Lion tenanted units at Cromer and chalet roof repairs at Sheringham were not conclusive so works are to be instructed to the incumbent MTC using the change variation instruction.
- Replacement fire alarm system at Holt Road offices is on time and within budget.
- Collaborative working with Estates to undertake remedial works at the Reef, Sheringham is ongoing.
- Works to upgrade / replace fire doors at Holt Road offices will commence after Christmas.
- Evaluating and scoping repairs to the Marrams footpath
- Capital bids submitted for financial year 2024 – 2025.
- Cromer Pier substructure works are on time and within budget.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Finance

- Training -
 - Mandatory finance training will take place on the 14th December, with all managers with budget responsibility required to attend.
- Recruitment -
 - An interim Head of Finance has been appointed and will start in December to assist the S151 fulfil her statutory duties.
 - The team were successful in recruiting into two vacant posts, Accountancy assistant and Finance officer, this will start to build much needed resource and resilience within the team and help us address outstanding internal audit recommendations.

Revenues

- Training/Development -
 - Ongoing internal training of three Level 3 Business Admin Certificated apprentices
 - External training for an officer studying towards the Diploma in Institute of Revenues, Rating & Valuation (IRRV)
 - Team leader studying towards the level 5 CMI management qualification.
- Service Improvements -
 - Online forms - reviewing and improving the most 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 including a direct debit online form to save NNDC paying capita for the current form provided on our webpages.
- Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) -
 - Working with Love Holt on their request to be the first Business Improvement Districts (BID) in North Norfolk. The start date is likely to be 1 April 2025.
 - The council tax discount paper for 2024/25 has been passed by Full Council on 22 November 2023 which includes reducing the 24-month empty property period to 12 months to charge an empty property premium from 1 April 2024. It also allows for a Second Home premium of 100% to be charged from 1 April 2025.

Estates

- Rent reviews and lease renewals for industrial units are to commence.
- Update of Asset Management Plan

Property Services

- Recruitment for a shared apprentice to cover PS, Housing Options, IHAT has been agreed and will start shortly.
- Cromer LED lighting tender phase 2 / 3 is due out early 2024.
- Working with NWHAZ to deliver Black Swan Loke, North Walsham. Hoping to commence works early 2024.
- Working with the Procurement Officer to issue a consultant contract early next year.

3 Meetings attended

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