

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

FEBRUARY 2024

COUNCILLOR ADAMS - CABINET MEMBER FOR STRATEGY, COUNTYWIDE WORKING AND EXTERNAL PARTNERSHIPS, PERFORMANCE, COMMUNICATIONS, HR AND LEGAL SERVICES

For the period December 2023 – February 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

Electoral Services

- Planning is well underway for the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner Elections which are being held across the district on Thursday 2nd May 2024 with Polling station bookings almost complete.
- We also have had a good response on staff availability and are in the process of making job offers to fill roles at each polling station and the Count.

Communications

- The main focus of the Communications Team has been the production of the next Outlook magazine. This is due to be distributed to every home in the District in the week commencing March 11.
- The team has also worked to provide extensive publicity for recent key public-facing events held by the Council.
- The team also supported the Cromer/Mundesley Coastal Protection Schemes working with our coastal colleagues and contractors Balfour Beatty.
- Our social media growth continues, and the Council's official Facebook page passed 10,000 followers for the first time in January.

Legal Services

- Eastlaw were again unsuccessful recruiting permanently into the litigation lawyer post due to insufficiently experienced candidates.
- One of our former legal assistants has now been formally accepted onto the apprenticeship program for qualification as a solicitor, and this formally commences in April 2024.

- Eastlaw have worked hard throughout the year and have met its annual income target two months ahead of schedule.
- Eastlaw are now providing employment law advice and support to the Council – work that had previously been outsourced – saving the Council money and providing upskilling opportunities for lawyers within the team.
- **Specific matters of interest**
 - Eastlaw are working closely with the planning department and Counsel in preparation for a five-day public planning enquiry due to take place in April.
 - Eastlaw, having instigated winding up proceedings, have negotiated the recovery of £29,000 of outstanding council tax from a single company.
 - Eastlaw have secured a final charging order for £31,000 and will progress to enforcement action to recover the same.
 - Eastlaw, having obtained all but two charging orders are in the process of determining the most appropriate enforcement action for recovery of the outstanding Council tax circa £220,000 from a single business.
 - Eastlaw have facilitated the completion of a number of section 106 agreements and issue of certificates of lawful use.
 - Beach hut leases have been amended and subject to client approval, estates should be in a position to start the process of the bulk renewal of some 300 leases.
 - FOI request figures show that the Council's current performance to responding to requests within the statutory 20 working days is at 94%. The national target is set at 90%.
 - After the FOI audit that was concluded in December 2023, we received substantial assurance, although we do have to raise the target to 95%, in line with the ICO's new guidance that this represents a good Council. Eastlaw are working to achieve this increase.

Democratic Services

- The Democratic Services Team has been working closely with the Norfolk Association of Local Councils to address issues affecting parish councils in the district. This has included arranging for temporary clerking support when required and providing advice to chairmen and councillors on procedural matters.
- The Council's YouTube channel 'NNDC e-democracy' continues to grow - [youtube.com/@nndcedemocracy/streams](https://www.youtube.com/@nndcedemocracy/streams). We now have over 200 subscribers and have reached almost 6000 views. There is a full archive of committee meetings on there for the last two years and the team continues to promote it to the public via our agendas and on the

website.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

Democratic Services

- Possible dates for an in-person meeting of the NNDC Town & Parish Council Engagement Forum will be shared with clerks soon so that a preferred date can be agreed and arrangements put in place. It is hoped that representatives from a cross-section of Council services will be in attendance. The focus will be on sharing information and improving engagement.

3 Meetings attended

Meetings:

- Kings Lynn BC
- Breckland District Council
- Norfolk Constabulary
- EELGA
- Coastal Gas Ltd
- Eastbourne Council led housing summit
- Sanders Coaches Ltd
- Public Sector Leaders Board and Norfolk Leaders
- Numerous other internal meetings.

To occur:

- Love Holt/ Holt TC
- Fakenham Leisure Centre Project Board
- Joint Staff Consultative Committee
- National Gas
- Norfolk Deputy Lieutenants
- Coastwise events at Overstrand and Happisburgh
- Carbon Literacy Training

Attended:

- National Coastwatch Institute reception at Cliftonville, Cromer
- Coastwise event at Trimmingham

Media:

- Norfolk Radio, Archant and Now TV

