

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

24 JULY 2024

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

For the period March to July 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Electoral Services

- The Electoral Services Team have over the recent months successfully delivered the Police and Crime Commissioner Election held on 2nd May 2024 and then following the former Prime Minister's announcement on 22nd May that there was to be a General Election, have been busy planning and delivering this major election on Thursday 4th July 2024. This was the first General Election run on new Constituency Boundaries and also the first with Voter ID and other changes implemented through the 2022 Elections Act which placed extra demands on both the core team and also colleagues in the Customer Service area. Thank you to all who helped deliver another successful election.
- The calling of the General Election involved a huge amount of work for our small Elections Team. In the period between the Election being called on 22nd May to respective deadlines the team processed:
 - 3,560 Registrations to Vote
 - 122 Overseas Electors registrations
 - 117 Voter Authority Certificates
 - 2,448 Postal vote applications
 - 476 Proxy Vote applications
 - Total -6,723 transactions
- In addition, during this period, the team also planned staffing for polling stations and the Count, ran 10 postal vote opening sessions and staged a District Council by-election for the North Walsham East Ward and the Wells Neighbourhood Plan Referendum.
- The team is now working on post-election jobs to finish up the project.

Human Resources

- Following legislative changes, the Flexible Working Guidelines and Family Friendly Policy have both been updated and relaunched.
- The team are currently involved in drafting and following this, implementation of the People Strategy, this was one of the outcomes identified within the Peer Review. Alongside this a new Learning and Development strategy will be launched.
- The team are in the process of renewing the Staff Induction process for new

starters within the organisation. As part of this process the induction will be moved online to allow all employees to be provided with the required information upon starting with NNDC.

Communications

- Communications supported the Council's smooth running of the recent General Election and By-Election. Regular reminders and advice to the public were issued regarding Voter ID, postal voting and other relevant information throughout the weeks leading up to Election Day.
- Seven external media representatives attended the count at North Walsham High School on July 4 and the Council was praised for its collective arrangements to facilitate their reporting of events – which this year for the first time included a live BBC video/audio feed running throughout.
- The Comms team assisted officers and members with adherence to the appropriate Pre-Election Period requirements and restrictions leading up to the Election.
- In other news, regular updates have been provided regarding progress on the coastal protection works at Cromer and Mundesley, including extensive video and drone footage. This has proved of great interest to the public, with one video of heavy machinery arriving at Cromer reaching 143,948 people on Facebook alone.
- The Council's combined digital audience continues to grow across its official channels, namely the website, Facebook, X, NextDoor, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok.
- The combined total number of followers of the social channels listed is 48,480, while the website was visited by 96,000 unique users during the last month (boosted by people seeking information regarding the election, potentially).
- The third annual NNDC Battle of the Beaches competition launches later this month, with Mundesley and West Runton having won in previous years. Each year to date more than half a million people have seen our content about Battle of the Beaches, providing invaluable promotion at minimal cost of 16 key beaches/tourism venues and supporting material about other key coastal partners and issues.
- A project is underway to consider a promotional campaign for inland/rural North Norfolk communities for the autumn. Meanwhile more than 55 items of content have been published promoting the various UKSPF and REPF strands of support on offer – with more content profiling delivery of the schemes to be published imminently.

Legal

- **FOI Requests**
 - The Council's current performance in responding to FOI request within the statutory 20 working days is at 98%.
 - After the FOI audit that was concluded in December 2023, Eastlaw has worked to follow the recommendation to increase the performance target to 95% - which is in line with the ICO's best practice guidance.
- **Income/Cost Savings**
 - Eastlaw worked hard throughout 2023/24 and has exceeded its annual income target by £10k.
 - Additionally, Eastlaw are now providing employment law advice and support to the Council – work that had previously been outsourced –

resulting in a saving for the Council. It also provides upskilling opportunities for lawyers within the team.

- **Recruitment**
 - Eastlaw has successfully recruited into its vacant administrative position with a Legal Administrative Apprentice - supporting the Council's aims of providing apprenticeship opportunities.
- **Debt Recovery**
 - In terms of debt recovery, Eastlaw continue to take enforcement action and are in the process of taking legal action against a number of high-value debts.
- **Supporting Other Departments**
 - Eastlaw are also supporting other departments with larger issues, including planning inquiries, judicial review, enforcement action, property transactions, commercial agreements etc.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Corporate Peer Challenge – Progress Review:

- The LGA Corporate Peer Team will be returning to the authority on Tuesday, 30th July to monitor how the Council is progressing against our Peer Review Action Plan.

Elections:

- Work has now begun on a compulsory review of polling districts, polling places and polling stations which will end on 31st January 2025.
- Later in the summer the team will commence the Annual Canvass which was delayed due to the General Election.

Legal Recruitment:

- Eastlaw is currently attempting to recruit a Coastal and Climate Change Transition Lawyer on a fixed term basis to support the Coastwise initiative.

3 Meetings attended

Attended:

- Crucial Crew 20th Anniversary

Meetings:

- RNLI
- McCarthy & Stone
- Norfolk Diocese
- District Council Network
- Broadland District Council
- Broads Authority
- North Norfolk Foodhub

- Public Sector Leaders Board
- About With Friends
- Holkham Estate
- Marrams Bowls Club
- National Gas
- North Norfolk Railway
- Serco
- Newsquest
- North Norfolk Foodbank
- North Norfolk Fisherman's Association
- Balfour Beatty

To occur:

- Norfolk ICB
- Public Sector Leaders Board
- Local Government Finance Summit