

# **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**December 2024**

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

For the period November 2024 to December 2024

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

### **Legal**

#### **Coastwise**

- The new Climate Change and Coastal Erosion Transition Lawyer started in post in September and has been providing direct support to the Coastwise team identifying legislation, policy and case law to ascertain how councils can best transition homes, businesses and infrastructure away from the coast, to eventually feed back to the Environment Agency and DEFRA with proposals for policy and legislative change. In addition, they have been advising Coastwise in relation to NNDC's potential liabilities and all types of contracts relating to the project, which have so far included drafting T&Cs for an art competition, negotiating consultancy agreements, advising on IP rights, and, significantly, drafting and bringing to completion a first of a kind agreement for the purchase of a 'planning replacement opportunity' from a member of the public whose home is at risk of coastal erosion.

#### **Freedom of Information**

- FOI/DPA request figures show that the Council's current performance to responding to requests within the statutory twenty working days is at 98% and has not dipped below 95% in 2024/25.

#### **Litigation**

- Focus remains on recovery of larger and longstanding debts at this time in conjunction, particularly, with the revenues and benefits team.
- Recovery of £29,000 of a £50,000 debt, with agreed installments of a further £4,000 per months until April 2025 which will see recovery of the full debt.
- The Council has instigated a winding up petition in the high court against a single creditor in relation to outstanding council debts of £44,694.50.
- This is over and above multiple charging orders which secure outstanding debts.

#### **Property matters**

- eastlaw completed on another house to be used as temporary accommodation.

### **ACV matters**

- Eastlaw have considered a number of Assets of Community Value ["ACV"] listings (either at first instance or upon review), with the following deemed successful:
  - Hunny Bell, Hunworth

### **Planning matters**

- NNDC can be seen to be leading the way in trying to mitigate the impact of the "nutrient neutrality" regulations by preparing and using section 106 agreements being signed by owners of houses who agree to the upgrading of their septic tanks which in turn releases new housing in areas affected by the "nutrient neutrality" regulations. In October alone eastlaw has completed 11 section 106 agreements to enable the release of 31 new build dwellings in the District.
- eastlaw also drafted and completed a section 106 planning agreement with the National Trust in a record two weeks to enable the expedited construction of a pedestrian bridge at Cabbage Creek , Stiffkey.

### **Code of Conduct matters**

- Most matters have not warranted investigation, with words of advice being provided as part of the initial assessment process.
- There is one matter which resulted in an investigation and is progressing to a hearing before the Standards Committee in December.

### **Human Resources**

#### **Pay Award**

- The pay award was agreed nationally for all employees covered under the NJC National Agreement on Terms and Conditions and paid in the November payroll. This was also the case for the pay increase for Chief Executives. Chief Officer pay award was agreed earlier in the year.

#### **Strategies**

- The Workforce Development and People Strategy and the Learning and Development Strategy are now at the final draft stage.

#### **Elections**

- The annual canvass is now complete. Around 6% short on last year's responses, but as we recently had a general election, that is to be expected. The revised register has been created and distributed accordingly.
- The polling place review is now complete and will be shared with Full Council in due course.

#### **Communications**

##### **The team has:**

- Continued to update the public regarding the Cromer/Mundesley coastal protection works
- Provided transparent comms regarding forthcoming transitional works at Happisburgh being delivered via Coastwise
- Covered the successful installation of solar panels at Victory in North Walsham

- Supported White Ribbon Day
- Kept the public informed regarding Storm Darragh
- Promoted public consultation on Public Space Protection Orders
- Promoted Community Connectors and Coastwise outreach activity via Positivitea and Coastwise Cafes respectively

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

## **3 Meetings attended**

### **Media Engagements:**

- That's TV, EDP, Independent, LGC.

### **Meetings attended:**

- North Norfolk & Broadland & Fakenham MPs
- Various meetings between Norfolk & Suffolk District Leaders
- Kings Lynn BC and Breckland District Councils.
- Potter Heigham Parish Council.
- Conservative Group Leader alongside Monitoring Officer to discuss consultation on remote meeting attendance.
- Walsingham PC, estate, faith groups and business representatives.
- Numerous internal/officer meetings.

### **To occur:**

- Business Planning
- Council Tax Support Group.
- Norfolk/ Suffolk Leaders Group.
- Anglian Water.
- Peer Review Challenge Progress Review

### **Attended:**

- Trimingham & Overstrand Coastwise Cafés
- DCN 50 years of District Councils reception and fair – Portcullis House
- EELGA Parliamentary Reception.
- Thursford Show.