

## CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

19 February 2025

### **COUNCILLOR JOHN TOYE - CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

For the period December 2024 to February 2025

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

##### **Funding and Programmes**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) programmes continue to be delivered successfully - both conclude in March 2025. As reported previously, most of the seven UKSPF workstreams have already met or exceeded their output and outcome targets; even so, the open schemes will continue to provide support through until the end of Quarter 4.

Programme delivery was reported to the UKSPF and REPF Project Board on 23<sup>rd</sup> January and to the Local Partnership Board on 6<sup>th</sup> February. Where projects have been implemented under budget, funding has been reallocated to enable additional schemes to come forward, thereby increasing the outcomes and benefits of the programme interventions. This has facilitated additional business engagement activity in the final quarter (see 'Business Engagement' below). Case studies of projects are being formulated (both written/graphic and video) and these will be posted and publicised on the Council's business support website (Invest North Norfolk), including profiles for some of the businesses that have benefitted from the REPF grant. This content serves to promote the value of these investments with the aim of inspiring others to engage in any future schemes.

NNDC's REPF Rural Business and Community Grants programme budget of £1.4 million was fully committed at the end of Q3 to support community and business capital projects and has already **levered over £2.8 million of additional private and community investment** into over 30 business and community projects.

### ***Project Case Study Example – Norfolk Padel***

The '[Norfolk Padel](#)' project, supported by NNDC with a grant from REPF, completed in December 2024, was a rural diversification initiative, developed by Jimmy Goodley and the team at MJ Goodley Farms. During a challenging period for the sector, it has become necessary for farmers to look at ways of diversifying their business to create new and different forms of income streams. The benefits spread beyond the single farm to the wider rural economy, employing local people and supporting rural supply chains.

What was special about this particular project is that Jimmy looked to his closest businesses to support the delivery of the new padel centre. The building was built by a local firm, experienced in delivering agricultural buildings, but this was their first leisure/sports venue. The innovative lighting rig was developed by a theatre design company that took a different approach to ensuring the correct lighting was delivered, allowing national and international competition standards to be met. Local firms delivered electrics, plumbing, CCTV etc. No business supplier came from more than 50 minutes away.

This created a national-standard venue for the fastest growing sport.



### **2025/26 Transitional Funding**

In mid-December 2024 UK Government (MHCLG) announced that NNDC would receive £405,000 of UKSPF funding for a transitional year (2025-26). A review of the present workstreams has been undertaken and new workstreams are being developed for delivery from 1 April 2025. This one-year allocation of UKSPF funding will continue to support businesses and communities in North Norfolk to address identified local challenges. Any new programmes that are developed will seek to complement existing business and community support. The outline proposals for this were approved by Cabinet on 3 February 2025 and further detail will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in April.

## **Business Engagement Activities**

Working closely with commissioned partners, the Communications and Web Teams, the Economic Growth Team are developing a number of business engagement activities in the coming year, including three significant events to be held in March:

### **Inspiring North Norfolk – 12 March – Woodland Holiday Park**

This inaugural event is intended to celebrate success and champion North Norfolk Businesses. This year, local businesses will be recognised for their achievements across four categories

- **Investing in Rural Diversification**
- **Investing in People**
- **Investing in Sustainability**
- **Investing in Innovation**



The event will provide the forum for businesses to share their inspirational stories, and video case studies will be shared throughout the year by NNDC.

### **North Norfolk Annual Business Forum – 25 March, Holkham Hall**

Hosted by NNDC at Holkham Hall, this event will provide the opportunity for networking and to meet key business support providers. Attendees will also be able to find out about the latest grant funding opportunities and the support available from the Council. There will also be an inspirational keynote speech delivered by the Managing Director of the Holkham Estate who will share his business insights, and the challenges and ambitions of this remarkable and diverse business at a historic estate.

### **North Norfolk Cultural Partnership Workshop – 27 March – Sheringham Little Theatre**

This is a sector workshop which will engage with the cultural business sector and creative industries of North Norfolk. This workshop will explore the value and contribution of this sector and discuss opportunities for those locally to collaborate further. The event will be introduced by Cllr Liz Withington and facilitated by the Economic Growth team.

## **Business & Skills Activities – General**

- Following a recent press article, discussions have been held with Marks & Spencer, which has expressed an interest in investing in the District (see [article](#)).
- At the North Norfolk Skills & Employment Forum (15 January) the group were presented with a useful overview of some of the challenges facing recruitment, training and skills in the district. The group continues to work collaboratively towards addressing these, but one immediate action was to promote apprenticeship levy transfer opportunities.

- In conjunction with the build-up to the forthcoming business engagement activities, the Council's Invest North Norfolk website is being refreshed and improved. Particular thanks to the Web and Communications team for their support with t.

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

### **Women Talk Business (Fakenham)**

**Friday 7 March 2025 from 10.30am to midday**

#### **Location**

Venue: Fakenham Library, Oak Street, Fakenham, NR21 9DY

Organised by Business and IP Centre Norfolk

[Find out more](#)

### **Video marketing session three: Launching your campaigns**

**Thursday 13 March 2025 from 9.15am to 12.45pm**

#### **Location**

Venue: Merchants Place, 16 Church Street, Cromer, NR27 9ES

Organised by New Anglia Growth Hub

[Find out more](#)

### **Women Talk Business (Cromer)**

**Friday 21 March 2025 from 10.3am to midday**

#### **Location**

Venue: Cromer Library, Prince of Wales Road, Cromer, NR27 9HS

Organised by Business and IP Centre Norfolk

[Find out more](#)

## **3. Meetings attended**

Meetings with local chamber of trade.

Meetings with local charity organisations

Police and Crime Panel

Bacton Summit

Skills and employment forum

Transport east summit

Norfolk Local growth plan launch Norwich

Various business visits

Council committees

