

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

19th March 2025

COUNCILLOR ANDREW BROWN - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT

For the period 8th February 2025 to 7th March 2025.

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

In terms of **Planning Policy**:

- (i) Further ***Local Plan Examination Hearings*** will take place in the week of 8th April 2025. These will focus on the issues raised during the Further Consultation on the Local Plan concluded on 19th December 2024. These Hearings will take place in our Cromer offices and will be led / chaired by our independently appointed Planning Inspector. For further information see: [Local plan examination latest news](#).

In terms of **Development Management**:

- (ii) The ***Development Committee*** has met once since the last Report and considered 6 applications at that meeting. Those 6 included two major applications – for a 41 room retirement apartment development at Sheringham – see [Development Committee Report PF241229](#) – and a change of use from a care home to 35 dwellings at High Kelling – see [Development Committee Report PF242717](#). The Committee deferred the former and agreed to authorise officers to approve the latter – once certain highways related matters are resolved.
- (iii) As the meeting on 6th March 2025 was the last of the financial year, Councillors may be interested to note the following statistics about the ***Development Committee's workload*** for 2024/25:
 - The Committee met 14 times;
 - 48 different applications were considered; 6 were deferred at the first meeting they were reported to. 2 of those 6 have since been reported back to Committee - and determined;
 - The Committee agreed to approve 38 applications and refuse 6 applications;
 - Of the 44 applications determined, 89% (39) were in accordance with the officer recommendation and 11% (5) went against the recommendation;

- Of the 48 applications considered, 12 of them were 'major applications' – one of which one was deferred and that one has not yet been reported back to Committee. All of the 11 determined were determined in accordance with the officer recommendation – and all of those were for approval;
- 19 different councillors 'called' an item into Committee – with no councillor 'calling' in more than 2 items;
- 16 different Officers presented at least one application to Committee; and
- The 48 applications were spread across 19 different wards – with Holt having the highest number – at 5 – having moved into the lead with the penultimate application considered in the year. Holt was just ahead of Coastal, Sheringham North and Stalham – all on 4 a-piece.

In terms of **Building Control**:

- (iv) On 26th February 2025 the Government announced that they were accepting all the recommendations on the ***Grenfell Report***. Those recommendations mean that the Government have now committed to establishing an independent panel to review the building control sector and in particular who should perform building control functions (e.g. a new national body, local councils or the private sector). The Government response also states that work is underway to set up the Independent Panel that will conduct the Review(s) and that they will be asking the Panel to make their recommendations by October 2025 – with the Government planning to set out their proposals by the end of the 2025 calendar year. For more information see: [Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 Report: Government response](#).

Finally, on other matters:

- (v) As ward councillor, it has been fascinating to see the interest the national and local media have taken in the proposal to remove the ***Sharrington phone box*** and it has been a salutary reminder as to the importance people often place on items of character in their neighbourhoods – and the fact that quirky stories often grab what some might see as a disproportionate amount of media interest. I really hope that Mr Harris succeeds in his 'Derek v Goliath' campaign to keep the phone box. As an example of the media interest see: [Sharrington Guardian Article](#).
- (vi) At the last Council meeting, Cllr Taylor requested that I meet with him, Cllr Bayes and our Assistant Director – Planning to discuss the possible development of a ***Stalham Investment Plan***. In keeping with the commitment given at the last meeting, we are now due to meet 12th March and we will look to see if we can progress work on the concept – potentially within the auspices of a Stalham Neighbourhood Plan.

Note: This report is shorter than the norm. That is because there have only been 4 weeks since the last Council meeting.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

The next Development Committee is due to be held on 3rd April 2025.

3 Meetings attended

February (from 8th)

- 17th Pre Cabinet and Business Planning
- 18th Public meeting in High Kelling re fatal accident incident
- 18th Appointment with The Guardian re Sharrington kiosk rescue mission
- 19th Full Council
- 20th Planning Portfolio Holder meeting
- 25th Town & Country Planning Assoc webinar on planning reforms
- 26th Rural Services Network webinar on rural connectivity
- 27th Local Plan review meeting
- 28th Meeting at Stody Estate with Economic Development officer

March (up to 7th)

- 3rd Cabinet and Business Planning
- 4th Melton Constable Parish Council
- 4th Pre Development Committee meeting
- 6th Development Committee

4 Future Meetings (after 7th March) due to be Attended

March (from 8th)

- 11th Stody PC
- 12th Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 12th Thornage PC
- 17th Pre Cabinet and Business Planning
- 18th EELGA planning reform
- 19th Full Council
- 31st Cabinet and Business Planning

April

- 3rd Development Committee
- 9th Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- 29th Standards Committee