

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 July 2025

COUNCILLOR JOHN TOYE - CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

For the period April to July 2025

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Funding and Programmes

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) programmes, delivered by the Council over the past three years and two years respectively, concluded in March 2025. A report was presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 9 April 2025 which demonstrated that all workstreams met or exceeded their output and outcome targets. The total value of business and community focused programmes delivered within the District equated to £5,554,899, with ~£2.7m of UKSPF/REPF funding and the remainder leveraged from private or other match funded sources, representing a substantial uplift on the original funding provided.

As set out in a report to Cabinet on 3 February 2025 (and further outlined to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee in April), MHCLG announced the UKSPF 'transition year' 2025/26 funding allocations to local authorities on 13 December. NNDC was awarded £405,095 of UKSPF funding and the Cabinet report summarised proposals for delivery under four workstreams. The Government made a further funding announcement on 27 March 2025, allocating £437,000 of REPF additional capital funding to NNDC to be utilised as a grant scheme – now established and a pipeline of projects is in development.

An example of the sorts of projects that the REPF grant has supported is the recently opened farm shop at Lodge Farm in Northrepps (see pic.) - a case study and video of which can be found [here](#).

The new funding is significantly reduced from the previous years, but the intention remains for it to be invested in local priorities that contribute to the Corporate and Economic Growth strategies



while delivering against the Government's specified missions, themes, subthemes, outputs and outcomes for the funding programme.

The overarching key UKSPF workstreams are:

Addressing Fuel Poverty

The Council's Energy Officer will promote energy efficiency measures for local households. This provision will play a key role in ensuring that eligible households in north Norfolk are aware of and well-positioned to access available funding, thereby maximising the benefits of various initiatives aimed at improving energy efficiency through retrofitting improvements to residential properties.

Business Support and Engagement

This programme encompasses a number of separate strands delivering a range of business support and engagement activities across a range of sectors in the District. This will include holding business events (North Norfolk Annual Business Forum, Inspiring North Norfolk, cultural sector partnership event and a visitor economy sector conference); producing case studies (for sharing on Invest North Norfolk, e-bulletin, social media etc); business training workshops; and partner networking events along with specialist business support to north Norfolk businesses via the Growth Hub. This will also include bespoke services such as 1:1 engagement, advice, business planning and growth services, grant support, workshops and training. It also encompasses administration of the 2025-26 REPF grant scheme.

Destination Marketing

A 2025 promotional campaign designed to market the District will tap into the desire for 'staycations' and repeat visits, majoring on the comfort, satisfaction and familiarity of the destination. Visit North Norfolk will promote north Norfolk as the ideal holiday destination, using the researched/evidenced visitor motivators of food and drink, heritage, history and culture, dog-friendly, nature and attractions. The campaign's call-to-action will target prior north Norfolk visitors. Targeting will also continue to include the local catchment to encourage 'days out on your doorstep' to local communities. A highly visual campaign, using film and images, will appeal to all audiences and show the breadth of things to do in north Norfolk, with the aim of extending frequency and length of stays and driving footfall through digital marketing.

High Street and Town Centre Support

A package of support has been developed for the towns/retail centres across the District – 'North Norfolk High Streets Matter'. Discussions are presently being held with key stakeholders in each town to understand the aspirations for their town centres and high streets. The initiative has been designed to drive footfall and increase dwell-time; it includes grant support to deliver initiatives such as wayfinding and interpretation and small-scale physical improvements. A small grants scheme has been established for retail businesses, focusing on Fakenham, North Walsham and Stalham in summer 2025-26 and rolling out to other towns in the winter/2026. This is complemented by a separate retail excellence skills scheme (workshops),

Love Your Market Town and Go Digital Initiatives (delivered and funded by NCC).

Creative Foundations Fund

On 29th May 2025, the Government announced the launch of an £85 million fund to help cultural organisations and institutions (with some exclusions) to provide support for vital repairs and upgrades that will assist with their sustainability. The new Creative Foundations Fund will help arts venues across England to address a range of issues, such as repairing building infrastructure, outdated or failing systems, inefficient energy systems and inaccessible spaces. Whilst the funding is limited and likely to be highly competitive, the Council recognises that it owns certain key assets that potentially could be eligible and so relevant officers are presently exploring options for this funding.

Invest North Norfolk

Invest North Norfolk – the Council's business facing brand and portal – has continued to develop and expand, serving as a valuable resource to support businesses with fulfilling their growth aspirations. Over 450 businesses have already signed up to receive the monthly 'INN the Know' bulletin which helps to keep businesses abreast of the latest support information. All are welcome to sign up to this. To register, please visit [here](#).

We are also keen to shine a spotlight on local businesses who are doing exemplary things within the District, whether excelling within their sector, investing in innovation, sustainable practices or local jobs. Case studies, and videos in particular, help to inspire and encourage both indigenous and inward investment.

A recent example of this is a case study on JW Automarine which is a world leader in lift bag technology and has been in Fakenham for over fifty years. A case study and video of this business can be found [here](#).



Rural Position Statement & Digital Infrastructure

It is recognised that as a rural-coastal community, north Norfolk faces a number of challenges – both immediate and projected over the coming decade. Whilst presently at an embryonic stage, there is an intention within this financial year to produce a Rural Position Statement serving to illustrate the depth of these challenges which, in the context of Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution, is considered as being increasingly valuable. At this stage, a process of data/evidence and information gathering and a mapping of relevant stakeholders is being undertaken.

In addition, a separate but related exercise has commenced to understand the critical issues of mobile and digital infrastructure within north Norfolk. Meetings have been held with relevant Officers to better understand the issues. Input from Members to help identify local challenges and 'not spots' has been welcomed. This piece of work is ongoing but, once completed, there is an intention to raise these matters formally with the telecommunications operators. Whilst there have been previous efforts to map these issues, north Norfolk has now also been given priority for a more thorough mapping of not spots through use of equipment mounted on refuse collection vehicles. The results from an earlier, less granular, exercise can be found [here](#).

Skills & Employment

On the 9 June 2025 the North Norfolk Skills & Employment Forum held a Workshop, chaired by NNDC and kindly hosted by Paston College. The Forum, which brings together a range of partners, including representatives from local authorities, higher/further education, schools and employer groups, discussed a number of important issues, with the key themes including succession planning, employer engagement, retaining & attracting talent and widening participation in training. The information from this workshop will be collated and help to shape and inform local skills policy and the development of future programmes.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Upcoming events can be found [here](#)

3 Meetings attended

There are a number of both routine, one off and focused meetings, events activities I have engaged in this period, including:

Regional Energy Skills Hackathon
FSB North Norfolk Networking Event (hosted by Black Shuck)
Visit North Norfolk Summer Social
Norfolk Business Board Meetings
RSN Rural Housing / Rural Transport meetings
Business, Parish, Town visits
North Norfolk Apprenticeships & Training meeting with Paston, East Coast College and Cromer High School
Clean Energy Working Group
Royal Norfolk Show – Rural Business Awards (with particular congratulations to Pensthorpe on winning Best Rural Tourism Attraction, and other notable North Norfolk businesses and individuals recognised as runners up (see [here](#)).
Move 2025 at the ExCell.
Attended the VE80 London event