

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

July 2025

COUNCILLOR SHIRES - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, ASSETS AND PROPERTY SERVICES

For the period April to July 2025

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Finance

Outturn

- The outturn report covering the year ending 31 March 2025 showed a surplus (£0.622m) forecast at Jan 25. This favourable swing is largely down to improved income as well as significant savings in employee and supplies and services budgets.

Budget 2026/27

- Work has begun to identify potential areas for budget savings ahead of budget setting for 2026/2027.

Accounts

- The 2024/2025 Statements of Accounts were delayed in publishing beyond the 30th June 2025 deadline, it is now anticipated that these will be published by Friday 18 July 2025.

Audits

- Audit planning for 2024/25, has been completed by EY with the audit to commence in the autumn
- Two internal audits, Key Controls and Finance Application were completed with reasonable assurance.

Revenues

National Collection Results for 2024/25

- The **Council Tax** collection was 98.37% rounded to 98.4% against the target of 98.20%.
- This means we are top in Norfolk again and not just top quartile (25%) nationally again but are 22nd out of 298 councils nationally which is within the top 7.4% councils nationally.
- The **Non-Domestic (Business) Rates** collection was 99.45% rounded to 99.5% against the target of 99.2%.
- This means we are top in Norfolk again and not just top quartile (25%) nationally again but are 13th out of 298 councils nationally which is within the top 4.3% councils nationally.

Collection for 2025/26 as of 30 June 2025.

- The Council Tax collection was 28.87% against the 30 June 2025 target of 28.85%. This equates to an excess of £20k. We have collected over £31.9m to date.
- The NDR collection was 32.73% against the 30 June 2025 target of 28.85%. This equates to an excess of £1.32m. We have collected over £10.2m to date.
- For context, at the end of June last year, we had achieved 28.93% for council tax and are finding things more difficult with second home premiums and cost of living affecting council tax collection. At the end of June last year, we had achieved 28.46% for NDR, so we are continuing to do very well.

Estates

Vacant property:

- Cornish way – 2 units vacant – There is still interest from existing tenant to relocate to a vacant unit, a further unit is has received offers following marketing – this didn't progress and the unit is being readvertised.
- The Cedars Barns continue to be advertised. Vacant Annex has some interest from an existing tenant – but has not progressed.
- North Lodge Park hard standing – car park – we are awaiting instructions
- Fakenham Connect first floor offices are being advertised – no interest
- North Norfolk Visitor Centre – lease is progressing with Dentist, Heads of Terms to be signed as next stage and solicitors to be instructed. Architects visited.

Leases:

- Lease negotiations for the RNLI continue and monitoring of damp conditions. Rocket House Café lease terms agreed at Cabinet.
- Fakenham industrial unit lease renewal is continuing through the legal process.
- Donkey shelter – Building redevelopment by community organisation being considered. Financial appraisal received and following meeting to review.
- Lease terms negotiated in relation to Flash project.
- Lease renewals for key tenant at Cromer and Fakenham offices – have had some initial discussions.
- Cabbell Park car park lease negotiations to be finalised.
- No weekly let bookings are available and leases for these locations have been issued for 5 year period. Weekly let huts and furniture have been sold.
- The beach hut and chalet notice of rent increase has been issued and took effect from 1st April 2025
- Gas Governor, Sheringham – lease terms agreed

Disposal:

- Enabling land at Sheringham. The option agreement is to be further extended for a period of 6 months to enable the purchaser time to apply for planning consent for an amended scheme, alongside this advertising of the site for sale, will also commence. Legal transaction in progress and meeting held. Quotes for remarketing obtained.
- Highfield Road, Fakenham - Option agreement for Housing is progressing subject to governance approval.

- Mundesley a disposal of amenity land to Parish Council is in progress.
- Victory, North Walsham, EV charges, change is demise following removal of land to facilitate Flagship development being considered and contact legal work for licence for works.
- Shared equity disposals – for 2 properties are in progress.
- Interest from various Parish and Town Councils regarding acquisition of community assets being reviewed.
- Sale of Station Approach putting greens to the Town Council in Sheringham is to be put on hold to enable a whole review of the asset portfolio due to LGR.

Acquisition:

- Supporting Coastwise/Coastal Team in acquisitions. Completed on 3 x properties, 2 x land at Happisburgh, including one as a replacement car park and 2 further residential properties in progress. 1 x offer made to property at Trimingham that is in probate.
- Radar Station Trimingham is due to be sold, initial contact with owner – awaiting further information from them.
- Supporting Housing with purchase of additional properties. Most recent transactions - Completed on 2, 1 x Fakenham to complete early July, 1x in progress at Holt. Offer made for 1 bed North Walsham solicitors instructed. Awaiting instructions on final property when identified.
- Public Open Space – adoption of Highfield Park, Cromer is in progress.

Property Services

- The Leas play area at Sheringham is complete and we are expecting reopening of this new facility w/c 21st July.
- We are looking to promote inclusion going forward with NNDC play areas and are supporting the *everyone has the right to play* initiative, and this refurbishment provides an excellent opportunity to demonstrate our commitment
- Complete with accessible equipment and soft surfacing for the whole area.
- Working with the local member to develop a programme of works for general improvements to the amenity area to the west of the Leas public conveniences. Works to the horsebox shelters is complete as is improvement to cabling and lamping to 11 lamp columns along the pathway east & west of the Leas shelter. Further works have now been scoped with the local member and will focus on removal of the water features and creating a picnic area adjacent to the new play area.
- Working with Kate Rawlings for energy efficiency and improvement works to Holt Road offices to include improvements to existing roof PV's, electric vehicle charging points and new boilers.
- Albert Street public conveniences are now open and includes a changing places facility. This concludes the changing places programme and now offers this facility at 7 locations across the district.

- Working with Countryside and Leisure to support delivery of an electrical supply at Holt Country Park.
- Further works at HCP to include provision of an ECO classroom, refurbishment of the existing public convenience and design and installation of a new foul storage system.
- Design proposals and budget estimate costs for the classroom have been received and are being considered.
- Other works for Countryside and Leisure include provision of changing facilities at Cabbell Park.
- Design proposals and budget estimate costs for the changing rooms have been received and are being considered.
- Scoping works and design proposals for works at the Marrams Sunken Gardens in Cromer are progressing. Works here will include removal of water features replacing with low maintenance planting and improvements to footpath lighting.
- Pier sub structure survey has been completed and is currently being reviewed. The report identifies areas requiring immediate attention.
- This includes full rope access solutions below the decking and divers in the water. The survey will assess the structural integrity of the pier and recommend a sequence of works required over the next 5-year period.
- Working with Leisure Services and Openwide on the Pier backstage refurbishment works planned for January 2025. This work is now complete.
- Pier donation stations have been received and are due to be installed shortly.
- Collaborative working with Corporate H&S and Estates to review NNDC asbestos management procedures following audit by the HSE.
- This work is now complete.
- Collaborative working with Housing Options on the target hardening scheme for vulnerable persons.
- Continue to work with Housing Options on inspecting and maintaining temporary accommodation and refugee accommodation.
- Estates have handed over to Property Services their current and future project workload.
- Rocket House restaurant works are complete.
- Rocket House ground floor public conveniences will re-open during w/c 21st July.
- RNLI Henry Blogg museum damp monitoring has been extended for a further three months.
- A consultant has been appointed for the proposed refurbishment of the Pier auditorium to get the project moving forward so an expression of interest can be submitted for potential external funding.
- Reef remedial works are currently WIP. Rectification to the fire alarm system is complete. New undercroft escape hatch is being manufactured.
- Further works to internal high level poolside lighting and car park drainage repairs to follow.

- Cedars remedial works are in progress with further investigations required for damp ingress.
- Works to the Watch House Cromer have been scoped and a consultant appointed. A structural engineer has been appointed for the cliff stabilisation, and we expect to receive the design proposal shortly for tendering.
- Scoping and programming at the Marrams bowls club for complete removal of existing flat roof structures and replacement with new system.
- This work will include complete removal of asbestos containing material as well as new lighting and ceilings throughout.
- Designs for North Lodge pay & display car park have been received with some changes required before planning is submitted.
- Evaluating options for roof removal / repairs at Cornish Way and Catfield industrial units.
- Scoping works to the Donkey Shelter as part of the chalet refurbishment programme.
- Scoping and programming are now underway for the public convenience efficiency programme. Proposals will be completed and forwarded to the decarbonisation board for consideration. LABC and planning have been consulted and a structural engineer appointed to advise of suitability of roofs for load bearing purposes.
- The corporate consultant framework contract is now live with all successful suppliers appointed.
- The new Concerto asset management database system has been awarded and goes live in August. Training workshops are currently being arranged.
- A contract for the capital programme of church boundary walls has been awarded and works are being programmed for September.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Revenues

Second Homes Work

- There is much additional work created here to deal with the increase enquiries and to implement measures to reduce avoidance of the premium.

System Procurement

- The Civica Openrevenues system will expire for Revenues and Benefits on 1 October 2025, and we have agreed to procure a new contract with Civica. We have managed to get more modules for less costs which include the Business Districts Software.

Training/Development

- A revenues team leader has completed her level 5 CMI management qualification,
- A revenues officer has completed his diploma in Institute of Revenues, Rating

& Valuation (IRRV) and was awarded his certificate at the IRRV East Anglian Association AGM by the national president.

- A revenues officer has started her level 3 certificate in Institute of Revenues, Rating & Valuation (IRRV).
- Two new revenues officer apprentices have started their level 3 Business Administration qualification.
- A new revenues officer has started her revenues trainee position.
- The revenues manager has been nominated as Vice-Chairman of the IRRV East Anglian Association and a revenues team leader has joined him on the IRRV East Anglian Association Exec.

Service Improvements

- Online forms - reviewing and improving the most used customer paper forms is continuing. We have gone live with a new Non-Domestic (Business) Rates direct debit form that replaces one by Capita. We are working on a Non-Domestic (Business) Rates Change of Address form.
- The Long-term empty property review forms as part of our Business Process Review of the current process has been completed and is now live with updated webpages.
- We have also completed the work on the online Second Homes form which has gone live linked to our webpages to help with the increase in enquiries challenging the second homes premium charge.

OPEN Revenues Workflow Disk Space discussion

- Revenues and Benefit services in conjunction with IT and System Teams are reviewing the amount of disc space being used with a view to the size reducing. We are close to capacity and have agreed to implement processes to delete and archive old electronic accounts and documents stored that are no longer needed by the services.
- This work is important, and the Revenues data has been tested and implemented in our live system. A rolling plan to undertake this exercise will continue so we are in a much better place before annual billing starts next year when we need to create and save another year's worth of data.

Property Services

2025/26

- Capital works bids for 2025/2026 submitted. Outcome has been published.
- Budget saving proposals for 2025/2026 submitted. Outcome has been published.

Temporary Accommodation

- Working with EELGA on options for temporary housing solution.
- Membership of steering group to review EELGA options.

Procurement

- Consultant contract tender exercise is now complete and under evaluation
- Working up tender for car park repairs from current capital fund.
- Working up tender brief for new asset management system. Current contract expires June 2025 with no further extension allowed. Tender exercise is now complete and under evaluation.

3 Meetings attended
Fraud Hub Meeting Year-End/Annual Billing Review Meeting Revenue's Staff Meeting Revenues Portfolio Holder Check Ins Revenues Managers Monthly Performance Meeting