

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

24 September 2025

COUNCILLOR JOHN TOYE - CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

For the period July to September 2025

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Funding and Programmes

Progress is good on delivering the Council's transitional year programme under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) (£405,095) and the additional Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) (£437,000).

The one-year allocation of UKSPF/REPF funding continues to support businesses and communities in north Norfolk to address identified local challenges. Programmes are being delivered under four workstreams (with REPF providing grants for capital investment in improvements to businesses or community facilities).

Programme delivery was reported to the UKSPF and REPF Project Board on 24 July, at the end of the first quarter reporting period. The updates for each workstream are as follows.

Addressing Fuel Poverty

The UKSPF funding allocation enables the Council's Energy Officer to promote energy efficiency measures for local households. This provision plays 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. The 'Warm Homes: Local Grant' has been launched. Some households in North Walsham East and North Walsham Market Cross 'auto-qualify' for assistance through this scheme, so early promotion is being targeted there. The Energy Officer is also continuing to focus on Stalham, to build on the success of HUG2 delivery and Net Zero Communities work in the area, supported through the previous UKSPF funding programme. Sixty households have already received energy advice, and four eligible households have been referred and supported in making grant applications through the ECO4 scheme. Residents have also accessed energy-efficiency advice on the Council's website, and the schemes have been promoted on Poppyland Radio.

Business Support and Engagement

This programme encompasses various strands delivering a variety of business support and engagement events and activities across a range of sectors in the District.

Supported by the Growth Hub, specialist business advice is available for local businesses. This includes bespoke services such as 1:1 engagement, business planning & growth services, grant support, workshops and training. Eighty businesses have already received business support and advice, five businesses have been engaged in the 'Scale Up' programme and seven businesses are engaged in the 'High Growth' programme.

Destination Marketing

The 2025 promotional campaign continues to promote the District 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 highly visual campaign, utilises film and images that appeal to all audiences and show the breadth of things to do in north Norfolk, with the aim of extending visit frequency and length of stay, driving footfall through digital marketing. The video for 'A Taste of North Norfolk' can be viewed [here](#).



High Street and Town Centre Support

A package of support has been developed for the towns/retail centres across the District, utilising the brand 'North Norfolk High Streets Matter'. Discussions have been 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 signage & wayfinding and small-scale physical improvements.

A small grant scheme (the 'Town Ambition Programme'), designed to fund improvements to town centres, has been launched and promoted to key stakeholders in all the towns in North Norfolk and six applications have already been received. Small grants are also available 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 with workshops held with retailers in North Walsham and Fakenham over the summer. In addition, there are further schemes available as part of the package of support for town centres: Love Your Market Town and Go Digital (delivered and funded by NCC). To-date, nine Love Your Market Town projects, designed to support improvements in town centres, are in development.

REPF (Rural England Prosperity Fund: Rural Business and Community Grants)

Four grants have been approved (three community projects and one business project) with a value of £148,138. There are a number of business and community project grant applications in the pipeline.



An example of the types of projects that NNDC's REPF programme has supported can be found [here](#). Full details of grant-funded projects will be provided in due course.

NCTA Tourism Survey Results – North Norfolk

Twenty-two businesses in north Norfolk recently responded to the latest National Coastal Tourism Academy (NCTA) survey. The results are very similar to the national picture, although some notable variances may be due to the higher proportion of visitor attractions/activities in the businesses sampled. The key findings are summarised below.

- The responses indicated that aspirations for businesses are generally positive, with 68% being committed to growing and investing in their existing business compared to 55% nationally.
- In terms of business performance, turnover is higher than the national responses, with 82% reporting higher turnover or similar to last year compared to 61% nationally.
- North Norfolk businesses reflect national figures in terms of costs, with 90% saying costs had gone up by at least 10%.
- Profitability is better than the national response, with 54% advising that profitability was the same or better than last year compared with 33% nationally.
- A third reported higher visitor numbers than last year but, for 77%, spend by visitors was the same or down on last year.
- Business confidence very much reflected the national picture, with 45% saying they are at least 'somewhat confident'.
- The top five external factors affecting north Norfolk businesses are the same as the national responses – poor UK economic climate (82%), increasing costs (77%), seasonality of the destination (59%), poor/unpredictable weather (41%), and competition from other local businesses (41%). Additionally, 32% are concerned about competition from overseas holidays and 23% the VAT threshold.
- The rise in National Insurance and other employment changes has had a notable impact. Of those who employ staff, 47% have reduced the number of staff they employ, 42% are undertaking more hands-on tasks themselves, and 32% have a recruitment freeze. 21% have changed employment terms and 21% are employing more seasonal staff. These changes largely reflect the national picture.
- Further mirroring the national picture, 50% have increased prices by up to 10% and a further 23% have put prices up by more than 10%.
- In terms of business priorities, reducing costs (100%) and increasing year-round business (91%) are north Norfolk businesses' key concerns,

as has been reported nationally. Improving sustainability is important to 86% of businesses, along with improving staff skills.

- The key market for north Norfolk businesses is UK staying visitors, who are considered high priority by 86%, followed by UK day visitors (47%) and local residents (32%). These responses are very similar to the national picture, but education groups are a high priority in north Norfolk for 23% of respondents. European visitors are only a high priority for 6% but are a medium priority for a significant 37%.
- In terms of non-fiscal interventions, 86% (76% nationally) of businesses would like to see greater investment in destination marketing. Again, in line with the national picture, 55% would like business support to improve efficiency/reduce costs and 50% need support with maximising sales opportunities and revenue. A large proportion (68%) would be interested in training in digital marketing and 50% in how to increase sales. Half would be interested in learning how to use AI in their businesses.

‘INN the Know’ Bulletin

Every month the Council continues to provide information, helpful advice, and resources via its ‘INN the Know’ bulletin. All local businesses are encouraged to sign



up in order to be notified of new funding, training opportunities, events etc, please register [here](#) (and members are encouraged to do so also, so that they can better advise the communities they engage with).

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Forthcoming Events

North Norfolk Cultural Partnership Workshop - 17 September

Lead Without Limits: The New Rules of Human-Centred Power

Tuesday 7 October 2025

9.15am to 12.45pm

North Norfolk District Council, Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN

Register [here](#)

Women Talk Business, Fakenham

Friday 24 October 2025

10.30am to midday

Fakenham Library, Oak Street, Fakenham, NR21 9DY

Register [here](#)

Visit North Norfolk 2025 Business Conference

Thursday 6 November 2025

10am to 2.30pm

The Lady Elizabeth Wing, Holkham Estate, NR23 1AB
Register [here](#) (n.b. there is a cost for non-members)

Inspiring North Norfolk - 10 February 2026

North Norfolk Annual Business Forum - 10 March 2026

3 Meetings attended

FSB Networking event
Norfolk Business Board
Transport East Board
City College site tour
North Norfolk Skills & Employment Forum workshop
UEA meeting
Town Ambition Grant Panel
Love Your Market Town Grant Panel.
Meeting with Shop Fakenham.