

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

19 November 2025

COUNCILLOR ANDREW BROWN - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT

For the period October to November 2025

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

In terms of Planning Policy

1. The final report from the Planning Inspectorate has been received following the independent examination of the emerging **North Norfolk Local Plan**. The Planning Inspector has concluded that the Plan is 'sound', subject to the incorporation of a number of 'main modifications' set out in an appendix to the report.

The Local Plan sets out the vision, objectives and strategy for development in North Norfolk over the next fifteen years. It contains policies to guide the determination of planning applications and allocates sites for development.

The Inspector's report also confirms that the Plan meets the necessary legal compliance tests, paving the way for its anticipated formal adoption by the end of the year. Once adopted, the Local Plan will guide development decisions across North Norfolk through to 2040 (with a national requirement for review every five years).

A number of Local Plan presentations have been delivered to both Members and officers ahead of adoption of the emerging Local Plan, covering content and interpretation of policy. Further sessions will be delivered.

2. The Council has seen a significant boost to its five-year housing land supply, with the publication of the annual five-year Housing Land Supply Statement which demonstrates a 7.3 year supply, predicated on Local Plan adoption as well as updated planning permissions and housing completions.
3. A Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been created by Norfolk County Council (NCC) as is the requirement of the Environment Act 2021. This was approved by NCC Cabinet on 13 October 2025 and is expected to be published shortly. The Norfolk LNRS will need to be "taken account of" in the determination of future planning applications.

The Norfolk LNRS will identify biodiversity priorities and include a local habitats map, which identifies existing natural areas and key locations and opportunities for potential enhancement, expansion and improved habitat connectivity.

In terms of **Conservation, Design & Landscape**

4. The Norfolk Coast Partnership aims to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the Norfolk Coast National Landscape (formerly known as the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The group of Local Authorities and Natural England have drafted a new **Management Plan** which outlines its priorities and ambitions for the area over the next five years, and is now open for public consultation until 5 December 2025. This will be taken to the next Cabinet meeting before adoption in Spring 2026.

In terms of **Development Management & Planning Processing Unit**

5. The Development Committee has met once since the last report and considered 3 applications at that meeting. One item for Blakeney (**Development Committee Report PF251569**) attracted significant national and local media attention as it [related](#) to unauthorised works to a property that had been subject to a national charity raffle. The Development Committee carefully weighed the planning issues and resolved to agree with the officer recommendation to approve the application. The decision has since been issued.
6. Officer delegated and Development Committee decisions are reflecting a change to the weight being afforded to the emerging Local Plan (see 1 above) ahead of its anticipated adoption in December 2025. In addition to weight now being afforded to emerging policies, the Council is now able to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply which has a significant bearing for housing related applications and appeals in that the 'tilted balance' or presumption in favour of sustainable development test no longer has to be applied.
7. Significant work across the Development Management team is being undertaken in preparation of the imminent adoption of the new Local Plan. This work includes preparing back-office systems (including web content and mapping systems) and supporting documents to reflect updated policy changes.
8. The Open Digital Planning project continues to be implemented with the £50k funding awarded earlier this year, supporting the continued improvements to the planning service, inclusive of support for officers in achieving RTPI status. This fund is also supporting the digitisation of improved document management, digital upskilling of planning, IT and Geographic Information System (GIS) staff, and the creation of a suite of performance dashboards. As part of this project significant work is being undertaken to allow spatial information to be provided on

a national database – this includes Listed Buildings, Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas and Article 4s. This is part of the wider effort of MHCLG to improve the digitisation of planning information nationally.

9. On 14 October the Local Land Charge search function successfully transferred to HM Land Registry (HMLR). As an authority we will continue to provide CON29 searches and ensure all future charges are uploaded to the national database. The team continues to liaise with HMLR during this interim phase.

In terms of **Planning Enforcement**

10. The Enforcement Team has now set up 316 cases this calendar year, with the team closing 259 cases to date. The team has been actively serving Notices, with 7 Enforcement Notices served in the last 3 months, demonstrating the team's appetite and pro-active approach to enforce and seek compliance where it is expedient to do so. Condition Monitoring is actively on going with regular inspections taking place to ensure there is a pro-active approach to service delivery.

In terms of **Building Control**

11. The Governments call for evidence as part of the national review into Building Control provision has now closed. An interim report is expected by mid-November 2025.
12. Preparations for the Building Safety Levy are ongoing with the team attending seminars and training sessions in preparedness for implementation, due in October 2026.
13. An annual audit of the service will be undertaken in November 2025 as part of the Quality Management System and Service Improvement Plan.
14. One of the larger Registered Building Control bodies, The Assent Group, have ceased trading. Two of their Registered Building Control Approver (RBCA) companies 'Oculus' and 'LB Building Control' have been cancelling their Initial Notices. This work will revert to Local Authority Building Control unless a new RBCA is appointed within 7 days of the cancellation. This will bring unexpected work to the team with the vast majority reverting to the Local Authority. These projects will be risk assessed and triaged to prioritise the work, with the team assisting the affected applicants.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

The next Development Committee is due to be held on 14th December 2025.

3 Meetings attended
October 6. Nutrient Neutrality Mitigation Fund working group 14 Pre Development Committee 16. Development Committee 20. Cabinet Pre Agenda and Business Planning 20 Edgefield PC 21. Energy Savings Trust 30. Planning training session on Local Plan November 3. Cabinet 5. Joint Staff Consultative Committee 5. Rural Services Network on rural planning 12. Planning hearing at Sharrington HM Planning Inspectorate