

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

18 February 2025

COUNCILLOR JOHN TOYE - CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

For the period December 2025 to February 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Funding and Programmes

Good progress has continued on the delivery of projects across all workstreams in the UKSPF and REPF and project delivery and expenditure is on track. A number of the agreed targets have been exceeded and it is now the final quarter of the programme delivery, although Government has now extended the spend deadline to September 2026, which allows some flexibility in programme delivery if needed.

Although match funding was not a requirement, an additional £700,665 of investment has been leveraged so far in the transition year from business, community and other public and private sector sources, against the one-year UKSPF/REPF allocation of £842,354. This has optimised the benefits from the programme and the team have continued to leverage match funding across the grant schemes.

The funding programme has continued to support businesses and communities in north Norfolk to address identified local challenges as outlined below.

The overarching UKSPF/REPF funded workstreams are:

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 are well-positioned to access available funding, thereby maximising the benefits of various initiatives aimed at improving energy efficiency.

A total of 135 households have received energy advice, and 130 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 [Home | Energy saving tips](#) (324 residents). Efficiency advice and local and national grant schemes have continued to be promoted by the Energy Officer.

Business Support and Engagement

This programme encompasses a number of separate strands, delivering a range of business support and engagement activities across several key sectors within the District.

Supported by the Growth Hub, specialist business support is available for local businesses. This includes bespoke services such as one-to-one engagement, advice, business planning & growth services, grant support, workshops and training. One hundred and forty-five businesses have received business support and advice, eleven businesses have been engaged in the Scale Up programme, and eighteen businesses are engaged in the High Growth programme.

A range of business training workshops and partner networking events are being delivered. A workshop on '*Creating Great Online Content*' was held on 2 December and a further workshop was delivered on '*Understanding SEO to take control of your Google Rankings*' was held at the Council Offices on 14 January.

High Street and Town Centre Support

A 'North Norfolk High Streets Matter' branded package of support has continued to be delivered in town/retail centres across the District through engagement with key stakeholders in each town. 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.

Two small grant schemes, the 'Town Ambition Programme' (TAP) and 'Love Your Market Town' (LYMT), have provided grant funding for initiatives supporting town centres; eight Love Your Market Town and eleven TAP grants have been awarded and projects are progressing.

This has been complemented over the past few months by a separate 'Retail Excellence' skills scheme, with workshops held with retailers in North Walsham/Stalham and Fakenham. Thirty-one town centre businesses have participated in these, and eleven small Retail Excellence grants have been awarded to support their business plans. In addition to the workshops and grants, other complementary resources have been made available to businesses including a [Marketing Toolkit](#), and a [Retail Toolkit](#).

A 'Wayfinding & Signage' improvement scheme has been developed across the town centres. Stakeholders were engaged in developing individual town schemes. The design, manufacture and phased installation of new waymarking signs will be carried out over the next couple of months, and it is hoped this will be augmented by further local funds.

Building on this work, a further project to improve visitor experience will install eleven electronic tourist information points (e-TIPs) at key gateways and high footfall areas. This is hoped to be delivered over the next few months, including five screens that will be installed at five Greater Anglia stations in the District. This is entirely externally funded, with an additional grants being secured from

Greater Anglia, CTAP, NCC Passenger Transport and the Broads Authority to support the project.

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

Twelve grants have been approved (six community projects and six business growth projects) and the total 2025/26 RBCG grant scheme budget of £407,537 has been awarded. The majority of projects have been completed and claims submitted for assessment and payment.

All projects are on track for completion and grant defrayment within the financial year. Progress on the delivery of the grant funded projects is being closely monitored to ensure they remain on track.

Events taking place in February:

Meet the Mentor: One-to-one business growth advice

Delivered by Business & IP Centre Norfolk

4 February

Cromer Library

Local Leaders Round Table: Discussing business, the Budget, AI and more.

Delivered by Neil Lawson Coaching

5 February

Merchants Place, Cromer

Accelerating Business Processes with AI workshop.

Delivered by New Anglia Growth Hub

10 February

North Norfolk District Council, Cromer

Inspiring North Norfolk

An event held at Jarrolds in Letheringsett on 10 February, aimed at celebrating the success stories of local businesses, with the following categories: excellence in manufacturing; leaders in business; entrepreneurial spirit; rising stars.

1:1 Making Tax Digital for Income Tax

Delivered by Business & IP Centre Norfolk

13 February Sheringham Library

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

North Norfolk Annual Business Forum

10 March 2026

Details to follow

Accelerating Business Processes with AI workshop

Delivered by New Anglia Growth Hub
11 March 2026 – 9am to 12:45pm
North Norfolk District Council, Cromer
Register [here](#)

3 Meetings attended

Business Visits included:
08-Jan Thursford Collection
12-Jan Broadland Drinks
13-Jan Woodland Holiday Park
21-Jan Alphachase
26-Jan Benthic Solutions (Asteroceras Group)