

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**18 February 2025**

### **COUNCILLOR LIZ WITHINGTON - CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY, LEISURE & OUTREACH**

For the period December 2025 to February 2026

#### **1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**

### **CULTURE - FUNDING AND PROGRAMMES**

The Cultural Partnership will be administered by Sheringham Little Theatre and its plans for 2026 have been formalised, with event planning underway. It is hoped that this will provide continuity and sustainability to the sector beyond LGR. Major stakeholders such as the National Trust have expressed an interest in becoming part of this network.

#### **Visit North Norfolk**

VNN have refreshed the website for the start of 2026 and the latest campaign delivery is focused on our market towns. The link can be found [here](#).



#### **Deep History Coast**

Revitalising the DHC messaging will begin with the move and opening of the new DHC Zone at Sheringham Museum, in March 2026. New collateral is being developed alongside updates to the information points. More work is planned on the Geology Gallery at Cromer Museum and updates to the app, films and internal branding are ongoing. These all link closely with the coastal literacy work of the Coastwise team, delivering information on the dynamic coastal landscape of north Norfolk being curated by the Norfolk Museums team.



## **COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

### **Homelessness Prevention**

During January, the team received **19** new referrals to support residents threatened by, at risk of, or experiencing homelessness. These came from a number of sources, including the NNDC Housing Options team, The North Norfolk Foodbank, DWP, Housing Associations, Community groups and settings and self-referrals.

#### **Homelessness Prevention Case Study**

Ms W is a single lady with no family. She is in recovery from head and neck cancer and experiencing mobility issues. In addition, she has experienced recent loss of her long-term partner.

She was living in a top floor flat, with access via six flights of stairs. Her mobility issues also meant she was finding accessing her bath increasingly difficult.

These challenges had had a significant impact upon her physical and mental health.

She had also been served a section 21 notice by her landlords.

The Community Outreach Officer visited Ms W to support her with completing documents and encouraged her to reach out to her GP for health assistance.

They worked together to identify and view private rental properties that would better suit Ms W's needs.

After viewing a ground floor flat with a wet-room, the Community Outreach Officer assisted Ms W to make an application for a Discretionary Housing Payment to assist with paying the deposit and rent in advance, which was approved. This allowed Ms W to successfully secure the new tenancy.

Ms W is moving into her new home in early February and is looking forward to a new quality of life.

#### **New Connections**

This month, Officers have made a number of new connections with services that help to create a supportive network around those facing or at risk of homelessness.

These connections include Environmental Health officers, Victory Homes tenancy support officers, the Kings Trust, Routes to employment, Empanda, and Equal Lives.

### **Fakenham Market**

This month, the Community Outreach team were joined at the market by officers from Early Help and Prevention and Early Intervention Housing Options.

As with the previous month, the weather affected the number of stands on the market and therefore the number of people walking around the market.

Questions and comments included:

- Concerns around 'Your Choice Your Home', where customers would like a transfer but have issues with how long it may take and not being eligible for 2 bed properties due to the new housing allocation policy.
- Ongoing issues with affordable rent, especially for those who can't move out of Fakenham for work due to transport issues.
  - A request for help with the cost of home insulation
    - Queries regarding changes to council tax
    - Queries about joining the housing register

### **Falls & Frailty**

Data from the NNUH continues to be received on a weekly basis.

In January, we processed **39** referrals for North Norfolk residents. **4** were duplicates and **5** referrals went on to decline the service. A further **1** case was removed from the service due to ineligibility.

**72** calls were made during January.

This support empowers residents to:

- Stay safer in their homes for longer
- Become stronger and more active
  - Connect with others
  - Improve their income
  - Improve their wellbeing

### **Falls & Frailty Case Study**

Mrs B had experienced a fall after her walking cane had become caught in a pothole, resulting in broken ribs, injuries to her knees and shoulder and exacerbated back issues. Mrs B also has a number of health issues that impact her mobility and quality of life.

She uses her stick and a walker to mobilise, which she felt was sufficient but lost confidence as a result of her fall. On talking through her fears with the officer, she explained that, other than for appointments, she had not left the home in 6-7 weeks. This had further impacted upon her wellbeing and her access to social opportunities.

A referral for Mrs B was already in motion with Occupational therapy to ensure she has suitable aids in place.

The Officer went through options for things that would improve safety and support an improvement in confidence, including care alarms (which Mrs B had in place), radar keys and urgency cards, the swift service and registering a key safe with the East of England Ambulance service.

Mrs B reports not being very active and explained that exercise often exacerbates symptoms of her medical conditions. The officer therefore made a referral into the Musculoskeletal health team as a more targeted service to help improve mobility and increase activity safely.

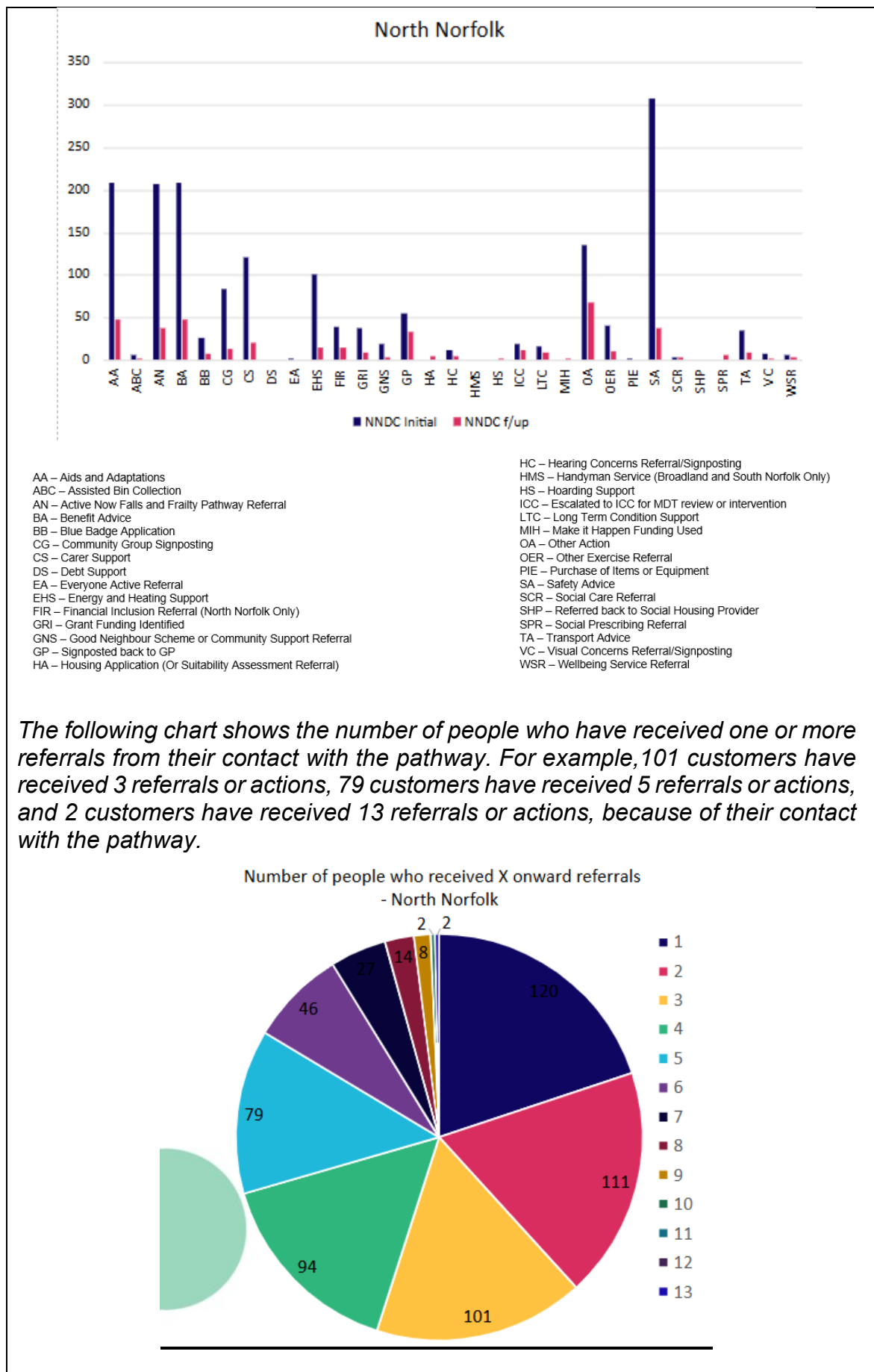
Assistance was also given to make an application for Attendance Allowance, for both Mrs B and her partner, who both help to provide care for each other. An application was also made for carers passports and emergency plans.

During the follow up call, Mrs B reported having seen the OT and now having aids and adaptations in place which have boosted her confidence. She has healed well. She is now in receipt of Attendance Allowance, has accessed safety and confidence aids, as recommended, and has started working with the Musculoskeletal health team, who have given her a safe and suitable exercise programme.

Mrs B states that she is making good progress, was very pleased with the service and felt that the information provided had made a huge difference to her overall wellbeing.

***Note: Due to overlapping reporting, the below graphs represent data from the start of the pathway in July 2024 to the end of December 2025. Further data will be provided in future reports.***

*The following bar graph shows the range of referrals and actions made during the initial and follow up contacts with the Frailty pathway officer. These vary from over the phone advice, the sending of leaflets and information by letter, signposting, and completion of referrals into the service, as some examples.*



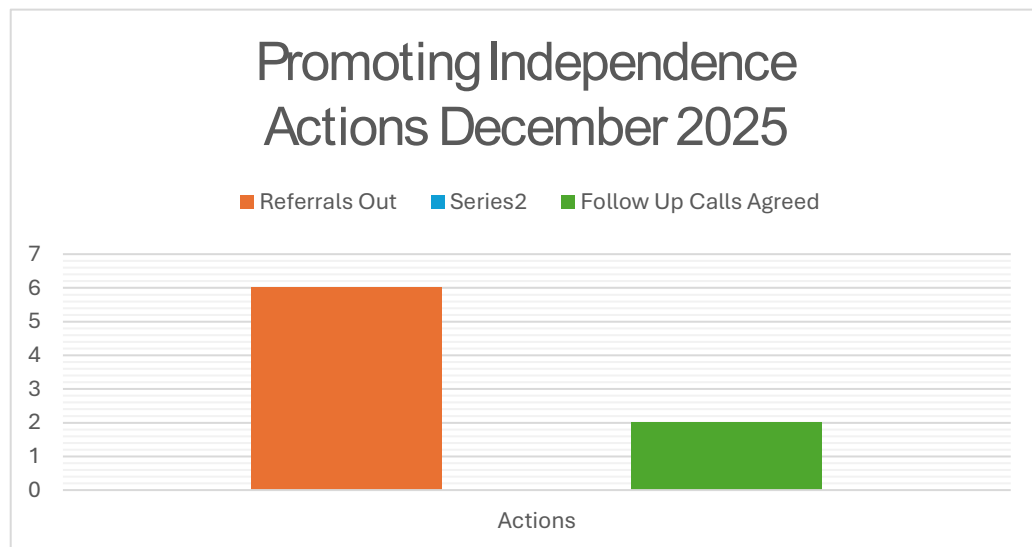
## Promoting Independence

Promoting Independence is a new workstream lead by Norfolk County Council which uses Artificial Intelligence to identify residents who may be at risk of falls.

Letters are sent via Norfolk County Council in batches. Contact is then made by an Officer based at NNDC.

In January, **48** customers were contacted. Of these, **15** opted into the service, **18** opted out of the service and **15** did not respond to contact attempts.

Of the 15 customers opting in to the service:



The number of calls has remained around the same since the last report.

There have been more opt-outs this month compared to previous months although more call attempts have been successful.

Opt-ins have increased and people are willing to talk, however there has been a large decrease in referrals and signposts.

A lot of people are willing to have a holistic conversation, like the services but will not opt-in. This is because they seem a bit unsure or will ring back if they change their mind.

The busy festive period may have had an impact.

### **Promoting Independence Case Study**

Mrs D is an elderly lady who has been struggling to maintain her property and to socialise. She was very emotional on the telephone in relation to her rented property and the state in which it was. She described to the officer the issues in the home include leaking sinks and doors that do not close leading to cold rooms, both which could increase the risk of falls due to slips and the cold.

Mrs D could not remember the property service that maintained her property, so a referral was made to NNDC Housing Options and then to Victory Homes once we were able to identify her provider to begin addressing these issues.

Mrs D reported that she has distant daughters and recently lost 2 sons, so is emotionally struggling and feels lonely. She struggles to phone people and prefers face-to-face conversations. The officer spoke about Community Action Norfolk and their offer of befriending services and one-to-one guidance, and a referral was made into the service with the aim of developing a detailed plan of support, and social connections.

### **Healthier Towns**

#### **Stalham**

- Officers met with the Practice manager and senior partners at Stalham Staithe surgery where it was confirmed that teenage and adolescent mental health is a high priority for the surgery. They also expressed a desire for a carers group and identified a possible location for this.
- A meeting was held with the headteacher of Stalham High School who has expressed an interest in being involved in Healthier Stalham. Here it was also flagged that adolescent mental health and underage pregnancy are key areas of concern, along with the reporting of anxiety as a reason for long term absence from school.
- Officers met with the new vicar of St. Mary's Parish Church. She has concerns regarding 'Liveboards'.

#### **Briston & Melton Constable**

- 9 community stakeholders attended the Healthier Information Session held at the Copeman Centre on 23rd January. Reed Wellbeing and Norfolk & Waveney Mind were keynote speakers at the session and discussions were held around the strengths and challenges the Briston and Melton Constable area face.
- An "Everything Briston & Melton Constable" PositiviTea followed the Healthier Information Session. 16 community groups, charities and statutory organisations attended the PositiviTea to promote what they do. The "Twin Tracks Choir" closed the event by showcasing four of their songs.

### Aldborough

- A Data and statistics introduction has been provided to the management group to assist with running orders and speakers for the launch event due to take place on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February.

### Fakenham

- Three key community stakeholders have expressed a strong interest in driving Healthier Fakenham forwards
- First Focus and the library have both raised that the use of ketamine is an issue in the area.

***Members are advised to contact Catherine Van Battum, Health and Communities Team Leader, directly for further information regarding the Healthier Towns initiatives.***

## **Other Service News**

### **Poppyland Radio Shows**

In December, three new shows were recorded:

- **Digital Switchover:** Lorcan Parnell returns to the studio - this time talking about the digital switchover. Listen in to find out when it will happen, why we must all take action, what that action is, why it's important and who can help us if we have any concerns.
- **Reed Wellbeing:** find out about the health checks and smoking cessation support Spencer McCormack and his colleagues offer and the person-centric approach they use to empower people to make healthier lifestyle changes
- **The Giving Wardrobe:** set up in September 2025 by Karen and Chris Claydon as they had recognised a gap in support, the Giving Wardrobe provides 2-3 full sets of new or as-new clothing to people referred into them by Norfolk-based charities and organisations.

### **North Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Partnership**

The North Norfolk Health & Wellbeing Partnership met on 27th January where Chair and Vice Chairs were elected.

Discussions were held around how new and existing member organisations strengthen and support the partnerships priorities which are:

Healthy Living

Musculoskeletal (MSK)

Digital Inclusion



## Health Literacy – Golden Thread

### Mental Health and Wellbeing – Golden Thread

There was an update on the direct grant awards and community grant pot as agreed at December's Extraordinary Meeting.

Given the changes within the ICB and Local Government, the Partnership agreed to adopt an action statement for 2026-27 rather than rewrite their strategy.

### **North Norfolk Community Hub:**

The North Norfolk Community Hub took place on 27th January with the theme "Health & Wellbeing".

Speakers on the day were from Kooth, CAN: Let's Talk About Cancer, Healthy Libraries and the RSPB.

37 representatives from community, voluntary, statutory and charitable sectors were in attendance.

### **Leisure and Localities**

#### **Leisure Contract**

Visits to our sports and Leisure facilities in November and December were down on the same time last year. As previously reported this can mainly be attributed to the works being carried out at Fakenham on the new swimming pool and gym extension. This works has reduced the facilities available to members and therefore visits have been reduced by around half. Health and Fitness memberships across the contract sat at 3475 memberships at the end of December compared to 3726 at the end of September – just before works commenced. Total visits for November and December were 38011 and 28495 respectively. We expect both visits and memberships to increase when the January figures are released.

Works on site at Fakenham continue to progress well with many areas ahead of schedule. Excavations of the old car park area have provided an insight into what can be expected of the new pool and facility.



## **Countryside**

Three Christmas events took place at Holt Country Park which were well received. 2 'Santa Paws' events and 1 Father Christmas Family Trail were delivered by the Ranger team, and saw 168 adults, 92 children and 62 dogs attend.

New felling licences have been agreed and issued for our three Green Flag woodlands providing clear tree management guidelines for the next five years. Green Flag applications for all three sites were also submitted at the end of January for 2026. This year Holt Country Park will be judged, whilst Pretty Corner Woods and Sadlers Wood will receive a mystery shop. Award announcements usually take place around June.

A large proportion of the Rangers work continues to be practical tree management works across all sites. As always this work is carried out either for safety reasons or as part of agreed management through our felling licences.

Works on the new community classroom and eco learning space are continuing at pace, with the main build due to be complete in February. Following the completion of the build there will be some landscaping to complete, outdoor gym equipment to install and some internal decoration before the classroom can officially open.



### **Blue Flag Beaches & RNLI**

The six blue flag applications were submitted in mid-January to Keep Britain Tidy (KBT). The application templates were slightly different this year and have led to some clarifications being required by KBT, these have all been dealt with and awards announcements are expected by early May.

The RNLI lifeguard service is in full swing getting ready for the summer season with training courses and inductions planned for the coming months.

Leisure team completing an audit of all blue flag and safety signage and will update where necessary ahead of the bathing season.

### **Pier Pavilion Theatre**

The Christmas show achieved 17998 visits in 2025, which was 450 more than 2024. The theatre is currently on its winter close down with the first concert being held on February 18th . 53 concerts are planned between the 18th February and the start of the summer show at the end of June, with 9500 seats already sold for these.

### **Markets**

As we are in the winter months some traders have taken some time away from the market. The new season is now only a few weeks away so the leisure team will be doing some work with comms to promote the market and encourage new traders to join.

### **Physical Activity Development**

Officers continue to work with Norfolk FA and The Football Foundation to submit an application for grant funding to provide a new 3G on the Fakenham Sports Centre site. This application is moving closer but does have some obstacles to overcome if it is to be successful.

## **Locality Officer Updates**

Junior Parkrun- Funding has now been secured through the North Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Partnership to start a North Walsham Junior Park Run at the High School. We will now discuss possible start dates but this will become the first Junior parkrun in the district. We are also still pursuing funding from the Family Hub to allow the development of a junior parkrun at Fakenham.

Hire Hubs- North Walsham, Cromer and Fakenham libraries have come forward as options to develop a library hire hub. This will see a selection of sports equipment provided for hire at the library locations. The Localities Officer has visited each location and seen the space available for equipment. Each library is keen and excited about the project.

Cromer equipment scheme- Officers met with Cromer Academy staff to discuss a solution to allow children who don't have the appropriate footwear to use the new 3G pitch at the school. Through Universal Place funding the school will be awarded funding to purchase boots which will then be loaned to their pupil premium (PP) children whilst they attend the school. There will also be funding available for the school to support PP children with alternative equipment so if it supports physical activity.

Get Out Get Active- The Localities Officer is working with representatives from About with Friends (AWF) to develop some physical activity opportunities for individuals with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This will be a trial with AWF to start with but if successful it will be developed into a sustainable project.

Bowls for Health- The Localities Officer met with the England Bowls Alliance and discussed the inception of a Bowls for Health initiative in North Norfolk. Working with bowls clubs the project offers 8 weeks of provision which focusses on a fun and relaxed introduction to the sport of bowls. The sessions are intended to help improve physical and mental wellbeing, reduce social isolation amongst participants and offer a great pathway to bring new members into the clubs. Conversations will be had with bowls clubs in North Norfolk to see who would be interested and then we will map the sessions against areas with the greatest need.

All to Play For- Unfortunately we are moving the session from Sheringham to Cromer due to a lack of attendance. Data suggested Cromer was our number one choice but there wasn't a location which could host the session however this can now take place at the recently opened 3G pitch.

## **2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**

### **UK Town of Culture**

The Government is encouraging towns to put themselves forward as UK Town of Culture by the end of March 2026. This is a significant accolade and the

benefits that go with it are substantial. There is a category for small towns of under 20,000 people, so the Council has brought this to the attention of towns across North Norfolk District. Local town-based organisations may wish to submit an Expression of Interest for their town or to make a joint bid for a cluster of towns. The link to the Government's web pages about this is here: [UK Town of Culture 2028 Expression of Interest: Guidance for bidders - GOV.UK](#)

**Cultural Partnership** – next networking event is planned for March 2026. Hosted by Cromer Art Space, it will include training on the new SLACK platform, a networking lunch and a CPD session of training for members of the partnership.

**Visit North Norfolk** – 4<sup>th</sup> March at Black Shuck Distillery with Howes Percival: Updates to employment law for tourism businesses. Eventbrite registration link to be shared with VNN members.

<b>3</b>	<b>Meetings attended</b>