

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

25 March 2026

COUNCILLOR LUCY SHIRES - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, ESTATES AND PROPERTY SERVICES

For the period February to March 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

Finance

- The 2024/25 Statement of Accounts audit has been concluded and the final document presented to the GRAC meeting in February; this met the backstop deadline.
- A balanced budget for 2026/27 was presented for approval in February Full Council along with an early forecast up to 2029/30.
- As per the internal audit Q4 timetable, the Key Financial Controls audit has started. This audit is designed to provide assurance that our controls are operating effectively and in accordance with the Council's policies, procedures and relevant legislation.
- Timelines and guidance for key financial year end processes has been circulated to all service managers.
- The advert for the vacant Chief Technical Accountant post has been advertised, with an interview date in mid-March.

Estates

Vacant Property:

- Cornish way. Roof leaks are preventing letting and awaiting outcome of capital bid.
- The Cedars Barns requiring re development continue to be advertised, with no viable interest commercially. Opportunities for affordable housing development are being considered. The annex building remains available to rent, with little interest due to condition. A capital funding bid was made to refurbish it.
- Fakenham Connect first floor offices are being advertised with no interest. Roof and heating repairs are in progress.
- North Norfolk Visitor Centre – is let agreed and the tenant, a dental practice has submitted a planning application, with works anticipated to start Spring/Summer 2026. Works to services to facilitate the letting being determined and specifications prepared.
- Donkey Shelter –Investigations regarding opportunity for services into the building and drainage continues in order to finalise the viability/options appraisal.

Leases:

- Approx 40 lease cases in progress or planned.
- Lease negotiations for the RNLI and Rocket House Café at the Rocket House have Cabinet approval. Following the public toilets the museum phased repair of the building is progressing with tenders to be issued and work to define the specification is ongoing. Works largely agreed final specification documents to be shared with RNLI for approval in the coming days prior to tender.
- Formalising the short-term agreement for car parking at Gold Park continues to be delayed as officers await a landlord response. A new proposal has been submitted to the landlord for consideration with a response expected in the coming weeks.
- Fakenham industrial unit lease renewal with rent increase has completed.
- A report is being prepared for Cabinet on the Marrams Bowls Club options and discussions with both tenants are ongoing. Suffield Park bowls club is delayed.
- Lease renewal negotiations for industrial unit at Catfield, Cornish Way with rental increases are progressing following initial rent assessment.
- Cromer Council office - 2 lease renewal negotiations are in progress.
- Utility lease for FLASH project has Cabinet approval and solicitors are progressing.
- Cabbel Park, car parking lease renewal is to recommence which will include a reviewed rent.
- Parking licence nearing completion at North Walsham, legal document finalised and issued to other side for signature.
- Foreshore lease at Happisburgh has Cabinet approval and is nearing completion.
- Happisburgh car park lease – Agreement for lease in place subject to NNDC completion of the car park work.
- Numerous easements requests across the district for utility supplies across Council land have been received and are in negotiation with terms being agreed for the 1 site.
- Funding agreement for works at Itteringham Shop, is in negotiation, with tenant providing further cost information.

Disposal:

- There are approx. 115 disposals cases on the case list with
- Enabling land at Sheringham. A range of alternative options is being investigated, and the draft independent valuation has been received.
- Disposal of Highfield Road car park, Fakenham to local housing association continues to progress.
- Mundesley a disposal of amenity land to Parish Council continues to progress.
- A number of Parish and Town Councils have approached the Council regarding transfers of assets that may be impacted by Local Government Reorganisation. Site information has been provided to Town and Parish Councils that have expressed an interest and valuations and negotiations will commence. An application form has been provided to them.
- Private enquires regarding the acquisition of Council land have been received and being considered.
- There are approx. 115 disposals at varying stages in the case list.

Acquisitions:

- Continued support to Coastwise/Coastal Team in acquiring land and property at risk of coastal erosion. A further property at Trimingham has been negotiated and solicitors are instructed. A meeting has been held with the owners of a site in Trimingham and some initial due diligence is planned.
- Supporting Housing with purchase of additional properties. 1 property is progressing through legal due diligence and a number of offers have been made/in negotiation for 3 further properties.
- Supporting Leisure with negotiations for easement for Holt Country Park with terms agreed in principle and draft Heads of Terms now expected following additional specification details and information being provided to the owner.

Property Services

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.

Working with Countryside and Leisure to support delivery of an electrical supply at Holt Country Park.

Works to construct the ECO classroom at Holt Country Park are now complete.

Refurbishment works to the public conveniences, and the replacement of the existing foul drainage system will commence in late March 2026 with a 5-week programme. Contractor appointed.

Temporary NNDC owned toilet facility will be used at the site whilst toilet is closed. Further works at Holt Country Park include increasing the outdoor play provision to include more accessible items of play. These works have been scoped and quotations sought.

Clearance works are now complete at the surveyor's allotment in Sutton. Some form of safety fencing and signage options are being considered.

Engineering works to Cromer Pier substructure works are underway and are on programme and within budget. Works beneath the theatre auditorium are complete with no impact on Openwide's operations.

Roofing works to Tides restaurant on the Pier are to commence shortly in advance of Openwide's resumption of operations. Contractor appointed.

Following on from Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service recommendations designs for a dry riser system on Cromer Pier are being scoped. This will allow NFRS to respond more effectively to an incident on the Pier. Consultant to be sourced.

Painting works to the superstructure elements of the Pier will commence shortly and be completed in advance of P125. Contractor appointed.

Tender returns have been returned for the cliff stabilisation works to the Watch House in Cromer. Evaluation is complete and the preferred bidder is within budget. Agreement is being sought from the covenant holder. These works will start in April 2026.

Tender documentation is now complete for the Rocket House Cromer has been prepared and we are feedback on the scope of works before issuing the tender.

A decision on the planning application for North Lodge Park is expected in March. The works will then be tendered and are expected to start over the summer. This programme of works will also include installation of a greenhouse and shed for the Friends of North Lodge Park.

Repair and repainting works are being scoped and planned for the Melbourne Slope area in Cromer. Consultant appointed.

Repair works to Cromer church boundary wall have been instructed and will commence in September 2026. Contractor appointed.

Scoping works for Cabbell Park clubhouse and changing facility. Consultant appointed. Currently working to identify surface water in one area of the football pitch.

Working with Estates to deliver chalet refurbishment works in Cromer.

Works to rebuild the Doctors Steps, and possible septic tank in the promenade at Cromer east to support potential new tenant in the donkey shelter. Consultant appointed

Final programme of amenity lighting improvements and surfacing works to the Marrams footpath Cromer are in progress. Contractor appointed.

Scoping and design works for the Marrams sunken gardens are in progress. Consultant appointed.

Further remedial works are underway at the Reef Leisure centre due to the failure of the substructure elements of the splash pad. This area is currently closed whilst options for repair are considered.

Undertaking a feasibility study for new public convenience in Stalham. Consultant appointed.

Refurbishment works are due shortly Newgate's Lane public conveniences in Wells. The facility will be offline for 4 weeks. Contractor appointed.

Works at Fakenham Connect for roof repairs and fire door replacement are being scoped. Consultant appointed.

Re roofing, energy efficiency works including potential installation of PV at Cornish Way industrial units North Walsham are being scoped. Consultant appointed.

Scoping works are underway for roofing and damp proofing works to the Cedars at North Walsham. Consultant appointed.

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. Currently Property Services are working with Kate Rawlings to identify suitable locations for inclusion in the programme.

Works continue the temporary accommodation housing portfolio with more acquisitions due this year.

External training has been received, and bespoke PPE has been issued to Property Services MSO's and staff for compliance with Awaab's Law (damp and mould recognition and treatment)

Scoping works for play area equipment installation. Locations to be confirmed and equipment procured but likely to include play areas in Cromer, Sheringham, Stalham, North Walsham, Fakenham and Wells.

Tender documentation is being prepared for the car park refurbishment scheme across the district, exact car parks to be identified but likely to include Cromer, Sheringham, North Walsham and Wells.

Working with Estates to deliver chalet refurbishment works in Cromer. This also includes works to rebuild the Doctors Steps, and possible septic tank in the promenade at Cromer east to support potential new tenant in the donkey shelter. Consultant appointed.

Car park matters

The pricing structure for 2026/27 was agreed at the tail end of 2025 and a public consultation was undertaken from 15th Jan for a three-week period.

Consultation responses were taken to Council in February – we have responded to the objections received as required.

Other activity in car parks, outside of the tender exercise for re-surfacing works, include improvements to some of our unmade car parks. This is mostly pothole filling and blading surfaces to smooth them out. Some car parks are also having new tarmac entrance improvements. These car parks are Clink Road Sea Palling, East Runton, Overstrand and Mundesley Road with Bacton and Cart Gap having been completed this week.

Runton road car park has plans to install a new entrance and roadway for which planning permission was needed. This is currently in the hands of the planning department. There are also some concrete posts that need replacing here and they are on order.

Our EV chargers were moved over to a new supplier from October 2025 as the costs to stay with previous supplier were much higher. This, added to the fact that there was no R&M which prompted the move. There have been problems migrating the units over, mostly because their software is outdated compared to the modern contactless units, several of them were also beyond economical repair. Morris street in Sheringham now has some new (Re-con but with 3 year warranty and half the price) contactless units which seem to be doing well. Will be interesting to see if contactless generates more income, especially in tourist areas, for ease of use compared to app charge sessions.

Away from car parks, Property Services have taken on the EV pool fleet at the office and the management and upkeep of the 450 or so benches that the council looks after. These have only been handed over very recently so too early to tell what kind of workload these will bring.

Car parks generate a lot of income for the council and, as they attract over 1 million stays per year, also generate their fair share of customer comments and complaints, workbenches, FOI and dealing with enforcement issues and penalties, as well as ongoing inspection and maintenance regimes.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

Finance

- Preparation for Outturn 2025/26, Budget Monitoring Period 12. The team will work closely with service managers to ensure the Councils final financial position is accurate and timely reported. This report informs the statutory Statement of Accounts document and forms an important part of the narrative statement.
- Production of the Statement of Accounts 2025/26 - ensuring that a lessons learnt exercise is undertaken before the preparation of the supporting working papers for the external auditors. This is essential to improve the audit process and reduce likely adjustments.

3 Meetings attended