

## **CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**

**25 March 2026**

### **COUNCILLOR JOHN TOYE - CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

For the period February to March 2026

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

##### **Funding & Programmes**

Good progress has continued on the delivery of projects across all UK Shared Prosperity Funded (UKSPF) workstreams, and project delivery and expenditure are on track for completion soon. Nevertheless, in December 2025 MHCLG notified Council's that the 2025-26 year-end reporting deadline had been nationally extended to 30 September to allow extra time for completion of project delivery and defrayal of UKSPF and REPF funding.

Throughout the development of the programme NNDC has continued to maximise opportunities to match fund the original allocation. Although this 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.

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.

To-date, 135 households have received energy advice and 130 eligible households have been referred and supported in making grant applications through the ECO4 scheme. The Norfolk Warm Homes programme, of which NNDC is a consortium member, has been allocated some additional capital grant to retrofit homes in 2026 so there has been a push on promoting this scheme including a large number of phone calls to customers who pre-qualify using in-house data.

Residents have also accessed energy efficiency advice on the Council's website [Home | Energy saving tips](#) (323 residents) and the energy efficiency advice and local and national grant schemes have been 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 a number of key sectors within the District.

Backed by the Growth Hub, specialist business support is available for local businesses. This includes bespoke services such as 1:1 engagement, advice, business planning & growth services, grant support, workshops and training. A total of 145 businesses have received support and advice, eleven businesses have been engaged in the Scale Up programme, and eighteen businesses are engaged in the High Growth programme. A manufacturing company in the district has been awarded a Business Growth Fund grant and three further projects are being developed by Growth Hub High Growth Business Advisors.

A range of business training workshops and partner networking events are being delivered. See further details under **Forthcoming Activities and Developments**.

### ***High Street and Town Centre Support***

A 'North Norfolk High Streets Matter' branded package of support has been 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', have provided grant funding for improvements in town centres; eight Love Your Market Town and eleven TAP grants have been awarded and projects are progressing and will be completed shortly.

The recent improvement to Chapel Yard in Holt is an example of one of the projects supported by the grant schemes.



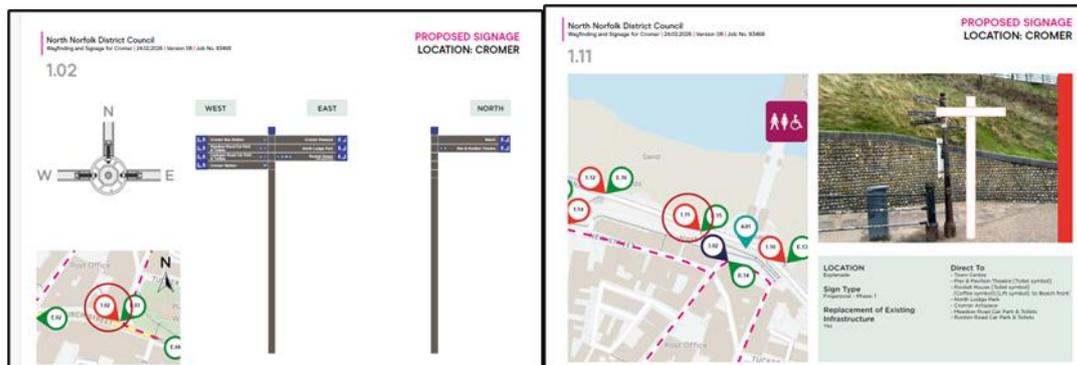
Also see social media video post [here](#).

This has been complemented by a separate ‘Retail Excellence’ skills scheme, with workshops held with retailers in North Walsham/Stalham and Fakenham. In total, 31 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](#).

On 19<sup>th</sup> February, Norfolk County Council hosted the Norfolk Market Town Conference at Thursford. NNDC’s efforts to support its town centres was in particular celebrated, held up as exemplar of excellent collaborative delivery.



A wayfinding improvement scheme has been developed across town centres in the District. Stakeholders were engaged in developing individual town schemes. The design, manufacture and phased installation of new waymarking signs will be carried out during March, and it is hoped these schemes can be developed and augmented with future funding.



Phase one of An Electronic Tourist Information Point (E-TIPS) project is being implemented, and five screens will be delivered at the Greater Anglia stations in the District during March and April 2026. Planning is in process for the remaining six screens

**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 grants defrayed.

All projects are on track for completion and grant defrayal within the financial year. Progress on the delivery of the grant funded projects is being closely monitored to ensure they remain on track. Grant payments are claimed in arrears by applicants on completion of their projects and submission of grant claims.

### ***Inspiring North Norfolk***

North Norfolk District Council proudly hosted its second Inspiring North Norfolk celebration event at Jarrolds Letheringsett on Tuesday 10 February 2026. The event brought together businesses, partners, and stakeholders to recognise the ambition, resilience, and creativity driving the District's economy.



The event celebrated sixteen outstanding businesses and individuals across four categories: *Rising Stars*, *Entrepreneurial Spirit*, *Excellence in Manufacturing*, and *Leaders in Business*. Together, their stories show the wide range of talent across North Norfolk and the vital role local businesses play in building a

strong and sustainable future.

The evening featured guest presenters from the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, Made Smarter East of England, and Jarrold Retail.

### **Category awards**

- **Rising Stars** recognised the next generation of talent making a real difference in their organisations.
- **Entrepreneurial Spirit** celebrated businesses showing vision, courage, and innovation.
- **Excellence in Manufacturing** highlighted firms setting the benchmark in production, innovation, and operational efficiency.
- **Leaders in Business** honoured individuals whose leadership is shaping the future of their sectors and communities.



The Inspiring North Norfolk programme forms part of the Council's wider commitment to supporting business growth, skills, innovation, and investment across the District. The video case studies featured on the night illustrated how advice, partnerships, and funding can help local enterprises to start up, scale up, and innovate, while creating jobs and social value for communities.

An example of a case study is that of Ben Marshall, Managing Director for Pensthope, who was recognised as a 'Rising Star'. The video for this can be found [here](#).



The Council thanked Jarrolds Letheringsett for hosting the event, the guest presenters for their support, and the businesses that shared their stories and achievements. Attendees were encouraged to continue connecting, collaborating, and championing one another as part of North Norfolk's growing business network.

### **North Norfolk Annual Business Forum 2026**



Business leaders, entrepreneurs and partners from across the district came together on Tuesday 10 March for the North Norfolk Annual Business Forum 2026, held at the historic Worstead Estate's 'Woodyard' venue.



Hosted by North Norfolk District Council, the event brought together businesses, support partners, training and education providers to explore the opportunities and challenges facing the local economy, while highlighting the support available to help North Norfolk businesses grow and thrive.

The forum provided a valuable opportunity for networking, collaboration and discussion, with attendees hearing from a range of speakers.



Worstead Estate owner, Bruce Paterson, provided a fascinating insight into the history of the estate, the journey it has been on, and outlined how the business has continued to diversify and evolve.



Jack Weaver, Chief Operating Officer for the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce, provided an economic briefing on the state of the UK and Norfolk economy, highlighting some of the differing challenges, but the many strengths and the resilience of local businesses.



Jonathan Winchester, Chief Executive of Insight 6, provided a fascinating and engaging keynote presentation on the importance of businesses walking in the footsteps of their customers in order to maximise business opportunities.

## 2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

### **Norfolk Netwalking @ Felbrigg Hall**

27 March  
Felbrigg Hall  
Register [here](#)

### **Accelerating Business Processes with AI**

Wednesday 15 April 2026  
9am to 12.45pm  
North Norfolk District Council, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN  
Register [here](#)

**Buy Local Norfolk April 2026 Networking**

Tuesday 21 April 2026

10.30am to 12.30pm

Pavilion Theatre, Cromer, Norfolk, NR27 9HE

Register [here](#)

**North Norfolk Networking - Cromer**

Thursday 23 April 2026

8am to 10am

Merchants Place, 16 Church St, Cromer, Norfolk, NR27 9ES

Register [here](#)

**North Norfolk Networking Coffee Morning**

Monday 27 April 2026

10am to 11.30am

Blakeney House, High Street, Blakeney, NR25 7NA

Register [here](#)

**North Norfolk Networking Coffee Morning**

Monday 18 May 2026

10am to 11.30am

Blakeney House, High Street, Blakeney, NR25 7NA

Register [here](#)

**North Norfolk Networking - Place UK**

Thursday 11 June 2026

5.30pm to 7.30pm

Place UK, Church Farm, Church Farm Rd, Norwich, Norfolk, NR12 9HJ

Register [here](#)

**3 Meetings attended**

North Norfolk Skills & Employment Forum

CleanTech East

Inspiring North Norfolk event

Norfolk Market Town Conference

Anglian Water Workshop

Vodafone/Three Mobile Connectivity Session