

CABINET

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Monday, 9 March 2026 at the Council Offices, Holt Road, Cromer, NR27 9EN at 10.00 am

Committee

Members Present:

Cllr L Shires (Deputy Chair)	Cllr T Adams (Chair)
Cllr A Brown	Cllr J Toye
Cllr A Varley	Cllr L Withington
Cllr J Boyle	

Members also attending:

Cllr C Cushing
Cllr V Holliday

Officers in Attendance:

Chief Executive, Assistant Director for Finance, Assets, Legal & Monitoring Officer, S151 Officer and Director of Resources, Democratic Services & Governance Manager.

Apologies for Absence:

Cllr H Blathwayt
Cllr C Ringer

17 MINUTES

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 2nd February 2026 were approved as a correct record.

18 PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

None received.

19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

20 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

21 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The Chair informed members that they could ask questions as matters arose.

22 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cllr V Holliday, confirmed that there were no recommendations to Cabinet.

23 BUDGET MONITORING PERIOD 10 2025/26

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates & Property Services, introduced this item. She explained that this was the last monitoring report for 2025/2026. The position remained the same, with the predicted surplus.

She outlined the recommendations, explaining that Full Council approval was sought to increase the 2025/26 capital budget for Disabled Facilities Grants to £2,317,266. This was to reflect the addition of £118,204 of grant award towards the scheme.

The other two recommendations related to recycling expenditure, specifically to use the Extended Responsibility Producer (ERP) grant of £1,312,840, which was previously forecasted to be an in-year contribution to reserves, to offset relevant in year recycling expenditure and that the resulting underspend of £1,312,840 in the respective recycling revenue budgets be transferred to the General Reserve to mitigate future unfunded new burdens.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

RESOLVED to

- a) Seek approval of Full Council to increase the 2025/26 capital budget for Disabled Facilities Grants to £2,317,266. This is to reflect the addition of £118,204 of grant award towards the scheme
- b) To use the Extended Responsibility Producer grant of £1,312,840, which was previously forecasted to be an in-year contribution to reserves, to offset relevant in year recycling expenditure.
- c) That the resulting underspend of £1,312,840 in the respective recycling revenue budgets be transferred to the General Reserve to mitigate future unfunded new burdens.

Reason for the decision:

To update members on the current budget monitoring position for the Council.

24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT Q3 REPORT 2025/26

Cllr L Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finances, Estates and Property Services, introduced this item. She said that this was the third quarter report and would be reviewed by the Governance, Risk & Audit Committee at the meeting on 24th March.

It was proposed by Cllr L Shires, seconded by Cllr T Adams and

RESOLVED

To recommend to Full Council that the Treasury Q3 Report 2025/26 is noted

Reason for the decision:

Updating Members demonstrates compliance with the Prudential Code to ensure adequate monitoring treasury management activity.

25 REPORTING PROGRESS IMPLEMENTING CORPORATE PLAN 2023-27 DELIVERY AGAINST ACTION PLAN 2024/25 AND 2025/26 - TO END OF QUARTER 3 - 1 OCTOBER 2025 TO 31 DECEMBER 2025

The Chair, Cllr T Adams, introduced this item. He explained that the report provided an update on the progress made to deliver the Corporate Plan 2023 – 2027 Action Plan for 2025 – 2026. Cllr Adams highlighted the following key points:

Action 3 – challenges regarding proposals to introduce food waste collection, including resourcing issues and service design and delivery

Action 9 – Further meetings have occurred regarding Benjamin Court in Cromer and there was some confidence that a solution was being sought.

Action 10 – Fakenham Leisure & Sports Hub (FLASH) project. Good progress was being made in line with the project timetable.

Action 12 – good progress at Holt Country Park with the improvements to the staff facilities now complete and the project to build a new classroom and learning space on schedule.

Action 14 – there had been a better-than-expected collection of the second homes premium.

Action 15 – progress on the delivery of affordable homes was going well, with an expected total of 94 new affordable homes to complete in 2025/2026.

Action 16 – the targeted number of inspections for housing standards had been completed.

Action 18 – the business / council interface was very successful, with several ongoing activities progressing very well.

Action 23 – Lobbying had continued regarding post-EU funding and discussions were ongoing about interim arrangements.

The Chair invited members to speak.

Cllr V Holliday referred to point 8 – Health, Wellbeing and financial inclusivity initiatives and asked about the timetable with the contractor. The Director for Service Delivery said that he would provide a written response. The Chair asked if that could be reported back to Cabinet.

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr L Shires and

RESOLVED to note the report.

26 CORPORATE PLAN 2023-2027 - ANNUAL ACTION PLAN 2026/27

The Chair, Cllr T Adams, introduced this item. He explained that the report set out the Corporate Plan Annual Action Plan for 2026-2027. He said that the actions proposed sought to balance the capacity of the organisation to deliver, whilst taking into account the staff and financial resources available as increasing focus was required to support the transition of services into new unitary council(s) and the potential to access external funding or partnership resources. He thanked officers for their hard work in pulling the actions together.

Cllr J Toye, Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Growth, said that he was pleased that the Council continued to deliver and had ambition, despite the uncertainty around Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

It was proposed by Cllr T Adams, seconded by Cllr J Toye and

RESOLVED

To approve the Corporate Plan Annual Action Plan for 2026/27.

Reason for the decision:

Sound management of the authority's staff, property and financial resources to deliver projects and initiatives which support improved service delivery and positive outcomes aligned to the previously agreed Corporate Plan themes and seeks to position North Norfolk's residents, communities and businesses strongly in the context of proposals to establish a Norfolk and Suffolk Combined Authority and the process of local government reorganisation in Norfolk which will see the establishment of new unitary council(s) in Norfolk in March 2028.

27 POTENTIAL LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Cllr A Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Enforcement, introduced this item. He explained that the report set out the next steps for the Council in terms of Local Plan making. The current Local Plan had been adopted on 17th December 2025 under transitional arrangements where the adopted Plan's housing requirement remained less than 80% of the local housing need. Consequently, the updated National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) required that such transitional Plans should address the shortfall in housing need and be brought forward under the revised plan-making system set out in the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) as soon as the relevant provisions were brought into force. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had since confirmed that NNDC was required to bring a Plan forward under the new Plan making system by the dates specified. These were 30th June 2026, where the Council was required to have published a 'notice of intention to commence Local Plan preparation' and 31st October 2026 whereby the authority was required to publish a 'Gateway 1 self-assessment'.

Cllr Brown said that these deadlines were challenging – especially the June one as there was Easter and the County Council election in the interim.

The Chair invited members to speak:

Cllr C Cushing said that he agreed there was no choice but to proceed with the requirements that had been set out but he felt he needed to stress how ridiculous it was that there was an expectation that over 932 houses should be built in the district every year. The projected population growth numbers for North Norfolk was less than 5000 in the coming years and the demand was simply not there. He spoke about the timeline for preparing a new Plan meant that there was likely to be a General Election shortly after completion and it was very likely that a new Government would change the requirements again. The Chair thanked Cllr Cushing for verbalising members' frustrations.

He agreed that the Government's expectations regarding housebuilding numbers were not reasonable and said that 300 homes a day would need to be built across the country to meet their overall target.

Cllr V Holliday said that she echoed Cllr Cushing's concerns and said that she hoped there would be 'principal residency' as part of any new Local Plan, otherwise none of these new homes would be for local residents at all. She highlighted the importance of consultees in the Local Plan process – both statutory and non-

statutory and suggested that they were notified early on that there could be an extra 450 new homes coming forward every year.

The Chair agreed with the point regarding engagement with consultees. He went onto speak about the approach taken in St Ives, regarding limiting the purchase of new houses to local residents only and how this was not working as effectively as hoped. In North Norfolk, with the introduction of the second homes premium there had been a modest reduction in second homes but NNDC was also very interested in securing new homes for residents via rural exception schemes which were working very well. He added that he was very concerned about the reckless approach to nature and biodiversity from central government and the impact that this would have on a district like North Norfolk.

Cllr L Withington said that some very interesting points had been raised and although there was no appetite to do this, it should be seen as an opportunity to position North Norfolk and set out the Council's expectations, especially regarding social housing.

It was proposed by Cllr A Brown, seconded by Cllr J Toye and

RESOLVED

- 1) To progress the review of the NNDC Local Plan in line with Government expectations and statute requirements.
- 2) To continue working to inform and influence the future production of a Spatial Development Strategy including engagement and collaborative work through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework.

Reason for the decision:

To maintain an up-to-date Local Plan and to comply with statutory requirements in order to provide appropriate planning policy and guidance for the district.

28 BIODIVERSITY DUTY REPORT 2022-2025

Cllr A Brown, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Enforcement, introduced this item. He explained that this was the Council's first Biodiversity Duty report, which related to the statutory duty first introduced by Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act in 2006, that was further strengthened by the Environment Act 2021 (Sections 102 and 103).

The duty required all public authorities in England to actively conserve and enhance biodiversity when exercising their functions and, legally required them to publish a Biodiversity Duty report to provide the specific information to evidence how the duty had been met.

The Chair invited members to speak:

Cllr V Holliday referred to the previous item and said that it was hard to reconcile the push for growth with the need to protect the Norfolk coast and national landscape. She then asked about replacing mature trees with small saplings and how this counted as biodiversity net gain. She also queried the lack of data on rivers and she asked if everything was being captured.

The Senior Landscape Officer replied that in terms of biodiversity net gain metrics, trees were assigned values on their size and one mature tree could require several

small saplings to replace it. In terms of rivers, the information in the report captured what was available in terms of biodiversity gain plans which had been approved via the planning process as of 12th February 2024 to 31st December 2025. There had been very few applications coming through that had affected rivers during this period.

Cllr L Withington said that educating communities about biodiversity net gain was key and there was very little in the report relating to this. She suggested that this could be highlighted to developers so that they could consider it more.

Cllr L Shires said that people weren't aware that the policy was there. She spoke about the Miyawaki forest in North Walsham which had grown incredibly well in the last four years. There could be more educational work done to promote such projects to residents and highlight the benefits. She suggested that a physical format such as an information board could be helpful in such locations.

The Chair agreed and said that local communities had engaged extremely well with the 110k trees project. Cllr A Brown agreed.

The Chair said that it was important to ensure developers achieved mitigation within the district, reflecting the local ecological needs. He thanked officers for all their work on the report.

It was proposed by Cllr A Brown, seconded by Cllr A Varley and

RESOLVED

- 1) To endorse the publication of the Biodiversity Duty report by no later than 25 March 2026 in order to comply with the statutory requirements of the Environment Act 2021.
- 2) To agree the subsequent reporting period for the next Biodiversity Duty report to be from 1 January 2026 – 31 December 2028.
- 3) To delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Planning to make any further necessary amendments, as required.

Reason for the decision

A legal requirement for public authorities to publish their first Biodiversity Duty Report by no later than 26 March 2026

29 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

30 PRIVATE BUSINESS

The meeting ended at 10.34 am.

Chairman