

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

17 June 2026

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

For the period April - May 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

Finance

- Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) – the team have been providing information within several different workstreams along with providing data to Grant Thornton.
- 2025/26 Closedown – detailed meetings have been held with budget holders to ensure that all income and expenditure relating to 2025/26 is correctly recognised. The accuracy of this information is crucial in the preparation of the Outturn report and the Council's Statement of Accounts.
- 2025/26 Interim External Audit work - the team have been working with EY to go through some initial audit work. This includes detailed walk throughs of key financial processes. Work has also been undertaken on rebuilding assurance on prior year Financial Statement balances.

Revenues

National Collection Results for 2025/26

The **Council Tax** collection was 98.34%, slightly down on last year by 0.03% but up on target of 98.20%.

This means we stay top in Norfolk for the best collectors of council tax!

The **Non-Domestic (Business) Rates** collection was 99.12% down on last year by 0.33% and slightly down on target of 99.2%.

This means we stay top in Norfolk for the best collectors of Non-Domestic (Business) Rates

Collection for 2026/27 as of 30 April 2026.

The Council Tax collection was 11.73% against the 30 April 2026 target of 11.70%. We have collected over £13.61m to date.

The NDR collection was 12.28% against the 30 April 2026 target of 12.25%. We have collected over £4m to date.

Estates

Vacant Property:

- Cornish way. Roof leaks are preventing letting and a roof replacement specification is being prepared now capital funding has been agreed.
- The Cedars Barns requiring re development continue to be advertised, with no viable interest commercially. Future opportunities are being reconsidered following the receipt of a proposal for community use.
- Fakenham Connect first floor offices are being advertised with no interest.
- North Norfolk Visitor Centre – Lease to Dentist completed and Tenant progressing works to the building following approval of planning permission.
- Donkey Shelter –Investigations regarding future opportunities for the building continues.

Leases:

- Approx 70 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 imminently. Legal documentation required to progress the works and leases is in progress.
- Formalising the short-term agreement for car parking at Gold Park continues to be delayed as officers await a landlord response. Awaiting response from landowner.
- 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 completion is imminent.
- Cabbell Park, football ground and car parking lease renewal has recommenced including a review of the proposed terms.
- 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 2 sites with solicitors instructed.
- Funding agreement for works at Itteringham Shop, legal terms in negotiation.
- Around 12 retail/food trader licences lease renewals to be commenced shortly including rent review.
- 4 Shared equity lease assignments and 1 staircasing transaction in progress.
- Lease update to align with pier operating contract extension in progress.
- 5-year leases for beach hut and chalet 2026 relets are complete.

Disposal:

- There are approx. 115 disposals cases opportunities or in progress.
- 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 is nearing completion.

- A number of Parish and Town Councils have approached the Council regarding transfers of assets that may be impacted by Local Government Reorganisation with approx. 35 potential disposals in phase 1 to progress.
- Private enquires regarding the acquisition of Council land have been received and being considered.

Acquisitions:

- Continued support to Coastwise/Coastal Team in acquiring land and property at risk of coastal erosion. A further property at Trimingham has completed. Discussions continue with the owners of a large site in Trimingham.
- Supporting Housing with purchase of additional properties. 1 further property has completed in Sheringham. 4 properties under offer and progressing through the legal process.
- Supporting Leisure with negotiations for easement for Holt Country Park with terms agreed in principle and solicitors are expected to be instructed shortly.

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 and refurbishment works to the boating lake shelter will be considered within the budget envelop

Collaborating with the Climate & Environmental Policy Manager to improve the energy efficiency of the Holt Road offices including improvements to existing roof PV's, electric vehicle charging points.

Holt County Park

Activities at Holt Country Park supporting the Countryside and Leisure team in connecting a mains electrical supply and public conveniences refurbishment. The male and accessible toilets are complete with the female toilets and foul tank replacement suspended until September because of roosting bats.

Works to construct the ECO classroom at Holt Country Park are now complete. Preliminary investigations Further works include increasing the outdoor play provision to include more accessible items of play. These works are being sourced with an external consultant appointed.

Cromer Pier

The current phase of engineering works to Cromer Pier substructure works are complete on time and within budget. Scheduled works beneath the theatre auditorium are complete with no impact on Openwides operations.

The consultant for the next two phases of work has been appointed and are currently preparing tender documents for issue. This will include the dry riser recommended by Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service

Roofing works to Tides restaurant on the Pier are complete with a 20-year warranty. Painting works to the superstructure elements of the Pier are now complete.

Other Cromer projects

Works to the Watch House have commenced with a 13-week programme. Site compound is set up on the old tennis court area.

Tender documentation is now complete for the Rocket House. The tender is due to go live on the 12th of June and works will proceed when appropriate consents have been granted.

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 and consultant have been appointed.

Scoping works for Cabbell Park clubhouse and changing facility. Consultant appointed. A new drainage system is being designed to alleviate flooding issue whilst minimising disruption to the playing surface.

Working with Estates team to deliver chalet refurbishment works in Cromer. Scope of works being discussed.

The proposal to provide a sewage solution at the Donkey Shelter is not deemed viable and now considering reverting to previous beach hut use. Works to rebuild the Doctors Steps access are being scoped. Consultant appointed.

Final programme of amenity lighting improvements and surfacing works to the Marrams footpath Cromer are complete.

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

Reef Leisure Centre

All remedial works are complete save for the splashpad which was believed to be installed incorrectly. Various investigative reports and options are being considered and a consultant has been appointed.

Further projects

Undertaking a feasibility study for new public convenience in Stalham. Consultant appointed. Report is due back on the 26th June.

Refurbishment works are due shortly Newgate's Lane public conveniences in Wells has been delayed due to supply chain issues. Expected to reopen 19th June.

Re roofing, energy efficiency works including potential installation of PV at Cornish Way industrial units North Walsham are being scoped. Consultant appointed. Ready to tender 26th June.

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

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. Currently we have 32 units.

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. Consultant appointed.

Tender documentation is being prepared for the car park refurbishment scheme across the district and will be issued in first week of July. This is likely to affect sites at Cromer, Sheringham, North Walsham and Wells. Entrance works planned at Clink Road Sea Palling, East Runton, Overstrand and Mundesley Road with Bacton and Cart Gap having been complete. A new Runton Road car park entrance will require planning permission.

Property Services are currently recruiting a replacement Asset Management Officer.

Car park matters

The Council has procured a new supplier of EV chargers to reduce costs and improve performance. Some contactless EV charge points in Morris Street Sheringham have been replaced with modern equipment

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. Whilst this places additional demand there are efficiencies to be realized.

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. Noting that all responses to the 2026//27 parking fees consultation have been responded to.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

Finance

- The team will on board the new Chief Technical Accountant, who will oversee Capital, Treasury and the Collection fund.
- The Outturn report and detailed appendices (Period 12 Budget Monitoring) will be prepared for July Cabinet and committee cycles.
- The Draft Statement of Accounts (SOA) - the deadline for publication of the draft SOA on the Council's website is 30/06/2026. There is then a period of public inspection. Details of when the external Audit will be undertaken are not yet known, however it is likely to be in the autumn 2026/27.

Revenues

Action Plans

Revenues have action plans to increase ebill take-up, to reduce costs in printing paper and postage costs

Second Homes Work

There is still lots of additional work here to deal with the increase enquiries and to implement measures to reduce avoidance of the premium.

We continue to receive FOIs regarding second homes which is resource intensive.

Training/Development

- A revenues officer is undergoing her level 3 certificate in Institute of Revenues, Rating & Valuation (IRRV).
- Two temporary revenues officer apprentices have completed twelve months of their 18 months level 3 Business Administration qualifications.
- We have another temporary revenues officer who has started her 18 months level 3 Business Administration qualifications and is specialising in Non-Domestic (Business) Rates.
- A temporary revenues officer has completed twelve months out of a 15 month revenues trainee position.
- The revenues manager is currently the Vice-Chairman of the IRRV East Anglian Association and one of the revenues team leaders has joined him on the IRRV East Anglian Association Exec.

Service Improvements

Online forms - reviewing and improving the most used customer paper forms is continuing. We have gone live with the following forms:

- Council Tax Moves
- NDR Moves
- Council Tax Application for SPD
- NDR Set up a Direct Debits
- Council Tax Set up a Direct Debits
- Council Tax Offer of payment arrangement
- Council Tax Notification of Death
- NDR Small Business Rates Review
- Council Tax Carers Relative and unpaid
- Council Tax second home premium review form
- Contact us form
- Council Tax Empty property review form

Property Services

Property Services are providing marshalling support for 2 Openwide events planned for the Pier and are also supporting the Pier 125 Gala day celebrations

3 Meetings attended