

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

17 June 2026

COUNCILLOR ANDREW BROWN - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT

For the period April to May 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Planning Development Management

The **Development Committee** met on three occasions in April and May including use of a reserve date, directly reflecting the increase in planning applications. Items included major residential applications in Cromer (RM/25/0776) and Blakeney (PO/25/2837) both of which are allocated sites in the new Local Plan and were approved.

New regulations including a **National Scheme of Delegation** are expected to come into effect in October 2026 which will fundamentally change the application types that will come before the Development Committee for determination. This is likely to result in a reduction in the number of items being determined by Development Committee. Further changes to the **Council's Constitution** will be needed to account for the national scheme of delegation including a new "gateway test". The revised constitution is expected to come before Full Council in September 2026 for sign-off after consideration in June by the Constitution Working Party. On 20 May 2026, Full Council confirmed that the Development Committee would reduce the number of members from 14 down to 13 to accord with new regulations.

Recruitment is now underway for four new posts in the Development Management Team comprising 2 x Senior Planning Officers, 1 x Planning Officer / Trainee Planning Officer and 1 x Household Planning Assistant. Assuming the posts are filled, we expect any new recruits to be joining us in late summer 2026 to help the team with increasing workloads following the adoption of the new Local Plan.

In terms of **Planning Performance** (Speed and Quality), this is still being maintained well above national targets with 24 month performance to the end of April 2026 standing at 97% within time for Majors and 94% within time for non-major applications. The Council's appeals record remains exceptional. Nonetheless, steps are being taken to ensure excellent performance can continue to be maintained including through recruitment of additional posts to meet demand and use of performance management tools such as Power BI to help identify areas for officer development and improvement.

Planning Policy

Work has continued at pace in order to meet the Government requirements of **Local Plan review**. The team received confirmation of a successful bid to MHCLG for New

System Plan Funding in April (£108,474.57) and a detailed project Plan was agreed through CLT in April.

Recruitment has commenced for 1 x Senior Planning Policy Officer and 1 x Planning Policy Officer 2 to meet the challenges of a 30 month delivery of a new Local Plan.

An early **Call for Sites** has been advertised, seeking expressions of interest from landowners and developers on potential development sites that could be included in the new Plan. The team have also completed an early scoping consultation document that is required to invite stakeholder feedback on how the council should engage with them during the plan making process and what the plan review should contain. This is timetabled to begin mid-July for six weeks.

Work is also being undertaken around member oversight with a review of the governance arrangement required to fit around the new plan making regulations and process and web pages are being updated to provide more information.

In addition to the Plan review, the team have undertaken formal review of the draft Hoveton Neighbourhood Plan and are awaiting the accompanying documents required to validate the submission for examination of the Tunstead Neighbourhood Plan.

A number of internal and external explanatory guidance documents which will set out compliance requirements and assist in the step change required to implement the adopted Local Plan policies have been completed.

A review of the **Norfolk Strategic Framework** document has also commenced through the Norfolk Strategic Members Forum along with a number of joint work streams across Local Planning Authorities on the evidence requirements to support the emerging new Local Plans.

Building Control

An additional technical support team member has been appointed using New Burdens funding for the Building Safety Levy, coming into force 1 October 2026. The New Burdens funding is confirmed at £111,800 which will cover the post for 2 years, with the remaining balance earmarked for software and process upgrades.

A review of the Building Control team and enforcement capacity is being initiated to ensure the service adequately meets the Operational Standards.

The national independent review of Building Control has now been completed and the report issued on 20 May 2026. *The report finds that the building control system faces longstanding challenges, including fragmentation, conflicts of interest, uneven capacity and inconsistent oversight, despite the professionalism and commitment of those working within it. It sets out principles for reform, alongside recommendations for action in the near term and options for longer-term fundamental reform*

The government have also responded: *The government is committed to supporting the building control profession to deliver vital public safety outcomes, whilst enabling timely housing delivery in line with our ambition to build 1.5 million new homes during this parliament and to deliver on the ambitions of the Warm Homes Plan. This is a vitally important workforce which is highly valued by government as the enablers of nationally important drive to provide safe, good quality new housing and other buildings.*

Our priority is to enable RBIs to operate as confident, independent regulators who are part of a system which provides proportionate oversight, clear processes and sufficient capacity. Future reform must be carefully phased and sequenced in partnership with the sector. This is critical to avoid disruption to existing arrangements, while preserving and growing capacity. We must ensure a resilient and stable system for the long term that delivers a strong, local regulatory service that protects the public and delivers high-quality buildings.

Enforcement

Enforcement Case Load and Projections

The first six months of the year have seen a significant influx of enforcement cases compared to previous years. While the team opens an average of 360 cases annually, current trends indicate that total openings will exceed 400 cases by year-end if current levels persist.

There are currently 252 active enforcement cases, which exceeds the teams target of 200. However, between 30 and 40 case closures are scheduled for approval within the next two to three weeks. These closures will reduce the active caseload closer to the team's target.

Notices Issued and Pending

During the first half of the year, the team issued six Enforcement Notices. These addressed various breaches, including an unauthorised fence, the installation of uPVC windows in a conservation area and unauthorised holiday lets. An additional three Enforcement Notices are scheduled to be served before the end of June 2026.

Proactive Condition Monitoring

Condition monitoring remains ongoing, with officers conducting regular site visits to monitor developments and/or verify whether permissions have commenced. The team continues to undertake as much proactive enforcement work as possible while balancing the high volume of incoming cases submitted to the Council.

2025 Statistics

Total Opened cases 366
Total Closed cases 325
Enforcement Notices served 19
Breach of Condition Notices 1
Section 215 Notice 1
Listed Building Notices 2
Planning Contravention Notices served 10

2026 Statistics (to date)

Total Opened cases:182
Total Closed cases: 118
Current Open cases: 253
Number of Enforcement Notices served:8
Number of Planning Contravention Notices served: 6

Conservation, Design and Landscaping

The Norfolk Coast National Landscape Plan was formally adopted by NNDC at its Cabinet meeting on 1 June 2026. This strategic document outlines a five-year strategy (2025-30) for conserving and enhancing the National Landscape which is a nationally

designated area managed locally by Norfolk Coast Partnership (NCP). The NCNL sits within the wider Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape which is a collection of three overlapping designations across the marine and coastal environment that also includes The Wash and North Norfolk Marine Protected Area Network and the Peddars Way and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail. There is also a small overlap with the Broads National Park at Horsey. The plan replaces the Norfolk Coast AONB Management Plan 2019–2024 and immediately becomes a material planning consideration in all decision making.

Following the retirement of the Council’s Senior Landscape Officer (Cathy Batchelar) in March 2026, her direct replacement (Robin Taylor) has started at NNDC and becomes NNDC’s staff representative on the NCP.

At Full Council on 20 May 2026, the team’s senior ecology role was enhanced to become a full-time position – previously it was 0.4 FTE. This will enable CD&L to be more responsive on matters pertaining to biodiversity net gain and nutrient neutrality, both of which have emerged in recent years and have introduced new levels of complexity to the planning system. The post is currently out to advert following the departure of the previous post-holder.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

The latest position regarding the Local Plan review will be taken to the next meeting of Cabinet in July 2026.

3 Meetings attended

March
30 Pre Cabinet meeting
April
16 Development Committee
May
18 Pre Cabinet and Business Planning
19 Stody Parish Council
20 Full Council
26 Thornage Parish Council

