

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

23 September 2026

COUNCILLOR ANDREW BROWN - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND ENFORCEMENT

For the period July to September 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Development Management

The National Scheme of Delegation comes into effect on 31 October 2026, after which, all planning application determinations must be made in accordance with relevant regulations. Related changes to the Constitution were agreed by Full Council on 22 July. In considering whether to call an application in for determination by Development Committee, Members are reminded that such requests made between now and 31 October 2026 under the old Constitution cannot be guaranteed to be determined by Development Committee before 31 October 2026 (there are only two possible Development Committee dates remaining: 8 October and 22 October). This means that applications where existing requests for call-ins made by Members (or the Assistant Director) that are not determined by Development Committee before 31 October will have to be assessed under the new regulations. A training session for Members is planned for 15 October at 10am via Teams which will cover this and some other topics as set out below. All Members are encouraged to attend.

A new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published (somewhat unexpectedly) by government on 17 August 2026 together with Housing Delivery Test results. These publications have impacted the determination of planning applications, which need to be made having regard to the new guidance. There are also implications for the Local Plan (see next section).

Publication of the Government's Housing Delivery Test (HDT) on 17 August 2026 confirmed that, for the three years covering the test period (2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25), 908 homes were delivered within the North Norfolk District Council area. This represents 54% of the total number of homes required (1,678) during that period. As housing delivery within the District was below 75% of the requirement, the HDT consequence relating to the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" is engaged under the National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026). The decision-making test applicable to an individual proposal will depend on its location and nature, having regard to national decision-making policies S3, S4, S5 and S6, as applicable.

The Planning Service are working through the new NPPF to ensure the implications of the new national guidance is fully understood for Officers and Members when making planning decisions. Training on this will also be covered on 15 October 2026.

A successful period of recruitment to the Development Management Team will see a number of new planners joining the service following the Resource Review agreed by Full Council in May 2026.

The Development Committee met on 16 July and 20 August. At the July meeting three related applications for a new ATM machine in Fakenham were refused with further applicant engagement taking place. At the August meeting three applications were considered, all of which were approved, relating to a residential “conversion” at Scottow, a new footpath at Overstrand and an amendment to a tourism related proposal in Fulmodeston. The Committee will meet on 10 September to consider two retail proposals in Holt.

Enforcement

Since the last update in July, the team has opened a further 100 cases, bringing the total number of enforcement cases opened this calendar year to 322. Current trends indicate that the number of reported breaches is likely to exceed 450 by year-end, significantly higher than the anticipated average of approximately 360 cases per annum.

The team continues to manage a high workload and has successfully closed 254 cases so far this year. However, individual officer caseloads are continuing to increase and remain above the level we would ideally seek to maintain. This is being carefully managed.

The team is also continuing to manage customer expectations regarding the timescales involved in assessing and determining enforcement cases.

Particular focus remains on the Tattersett tyres site, which is currently the oldest live enforcement case. A multi-agency review is underway, and it is hoped that a pragmatic and coordinated approach can be agreed to secure a resolution to the outstanding breach.

The team is due to attend the Magistrates' Court in the coming months to defend an appeal against a Section 215 Notice served in relation to the MOT Centre on Cromer Road, Sheringham. The Notice was issued due to the condition of the property, which is situated at a prominent gateway location into Sheringham. This represents the first appeal against a Section 215 Notice that the Council has been required to defend.

Alongside formal enforcement action, proactive compliance monitoring continues across the district. Current attention is focused on the large-scale development site on Overstrand Road, Cromer, to ensure compliance with approved planning permissions and conditions.

Planning Policy

The team continues to put in place the building blocks for undertaking the Local Plan Review and meeting early requirements under the Governments new plan-making system, with the formal 30-month plan making timeline starting by or before 31 October when the Council passes through Gateway 1, which is a self-assessment of readiness to begin plan making.

A Scoping Consultation ran for six weeks from 20th July to 31st August 2026, which sought views on what the new Local Plan should contain, where future growth should be focussed, what evidence will be needed and how people wish to engage

as the Plan progresses. 110 responses were received during this consultation period. A summary of the main issues arising from the consultation is expected to be published in November 2026. A second Call for Sites ran concurrently with the Scoping Consultation. In total, 243 sites have been submitted for consideration. These sites are now subject to a first stage assessment to consider their suitability for potential allocation in the new Local Plan.

A variety of evidence documents to inform the Local Plan are in preparation. These are being produced either in-house, commissioned to consultants, or commissioned jointly through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Officers Group. The studies being prepared include a Norfolk Strategic Housing Capacity Study, Local Housing Needs Assessment, Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Water Cycle Study, Economic Study, Retail Capacity Study and Strategic Environmental Assessment (among others).

The North Norfolk Design Guide Update has been awarded to Tibbalds and an initial inception meeting took place in August 2026. A series of workshops and meetings are currently being set up to capture views from planning staff and Members in the next couple of months. The Landscape Sensitivity Study, which will assess the sensitivity of the Norfolk Coast National Landscape, Heritage Coast and undeveloped coast to varying scales of development, has been awarded to Land Use Consultants and an inception meeting also took place in August 2026.

We have organised a public consultation on the final draft Tunstead Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 16 stage) which will take place between 7 September and 19 October 2026, following which an examination will take place. Trunch Neighbourhood Plan is progressing and is currently undergoing an initial draft plan consultation (Regulation 14 stage).

Of significance, the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 17 August (as reported above), which contains distinct plan-making policies and decision-making policies. On the same day, the Government published the Housing Delivery Test (HDT). The HDT looks back at housing delivery over the previous three years against the requirement set in the Governments standard housing method. Where LPAs are meeting less than 75% of the housing requirement the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' is engaged.

For the three years covering the test period (2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25), 908 homes were delivered within the North Norfolk District Council area. This represents 54% of the total number of homes required (1,678) during that period, and consequently, the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" is engaged. The decision-making test applicable to an individual proposal will depend on its location and nature, having regard to national decision-making policies S3, S4, S5 and S6, as applicable.

A review of the current North Norfolk Local Plan against the decision-making policies of the new NPPF is commencing to ascertain whether there are any 'material inconsistencies within the Local Plan policies, as the NPPF requires these to be given 'very limited weight.'

A successful period of recruitment sees a new Planning Policy Manager, Senior Planning Officer and Planning Officer joining the Planning Policy team to reach their full complement by 14 September 2026.

Conservation, Design and Landscape

An appointment has been made to the Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) post, with Ed Stocker bringing a wealth of experience, working most recently for the Norfolk Coast Partnership. His arrival fills a significant gap within the Planning service as one of the Council's main leads on Biodiversity Net Gain and Nutrient Neutrality and will take his place in external partnership groups.

The Government has recently published new guidance on the operation of the Nature Restoration Fund. The four documents are "Understanding the Nature Restoration Fund", "Using the Nature Restoration Levy", "Environmental Delivery Plans" and "Nature Restoration Levy Enforcement Actions and Appeals Process". It will be the responsibility of the Council's Senior Landscape Officer (Ecology) to take the lead in this area. These documents will operate in tandem with The Nature Restoration Levy Regulations (2026) which are expected to come into force shortly. It is also anticipated that Norfolk will see the publication of the first of Natural England's 'Environmental Delivery Plans' before year end.

The Council's CD&L Team Leader has met with the consultants appointed to review The North Norfolk Design Guide (as highlighted above) and has identified strengths and weaknesses with the existing, longstanding document. Examples of good and practice have also been forwarded to inform the new version. Work will now commence properly to shape and update the guide so that it continues to support the Development Management process going forward. Within this, Member involvement and input will be vital in ensuring that the aims and objectives of the guide are agreed by all parties.

Building Control

The Building Control team are currently preparing for the implementation of the Building Safety Levy that comes in to force on 1 October 2026. The levy is collected to pay for remediation measures for high rise buildings with unsafe cladding. The Building Control team will be the collection agent for the levy on behalf of North Norfolk District Council.

New burdens funding has been provided to ensure the correct staffing needs and software are in place to administer the levy on behalf of the Government.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

September
23 Full Council
24 Brinton and Sharrington Parish Council

October
5 Cabinet and Business Planning
8 Development Committee

3 Meetings attended
July 23 Norfolk Strategic Planning Forum 28 Norfolk Police and Holt Town Council 30 Brinton and Sharrington Parish Council August 6 Planning Portfolio Holder 12 Norfolk Wildlife Trust 17 Edgefield Parish Council 24 Pre Cabinet and Business Planning 24 Planning and Economic Development 25 Melton Constable Parish Council September 8 Stody Parish Council 9 Corpusty and Saxthorpe Parish Council 10 Development Committee