

## CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

16 December 2020

**COUNCILLOR RICHARD KERSHAW  
- CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH**

For the period November to December 2020

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

#### **Engagement with businesses**

The usual engagement with businesses has been maintained, albeit with a reduced level of site visits. Much of the current resource and activity has been focused on helping businesses to access grants administered by the Council (see below) and helping businesses to obtain funding and other local and national support.

#### **Lockdown Supporting Grants**

With the announcement of the national lockdown (5 November to 2 December), the Government committed to providing further grant funding which would be again delivered by Local Authorities.

*Local Restrictions Grant-Closed* – has been provided to businesses that were legally required to close during the national lockdown period and are registered for Business Rates. NNDC has been allocated £5,267,214 to support this. 2,781 awards have now been made, amounting to approximately 68% of the 4,104 eligible businesses. The total grant paid to date is £3,929,690 which is over 75% of the allocated sum.

*Local Restrictions Grant-Open* – is intended to support Businesses that have not had to close but which have been severely impacted due to local Tier 2 or Tier 3 restrictions. Eligible businesses will be entitled to a grant for each 14 day period that they are under local restrictions. Local councils have the freedom to determine the precise eligibility criteria for these grants; however, the Government expects the funding to be targeted at hospitality, hotel, bed & breakfast and leisure businesses.

*Grants for 'wet-led' pubs* – on 1 December the Prime Minister announced an additional grant for 'wet-led pubs' in tiers 2 and 3 who will miss out on the trade they would normally yield during the busy Christmas period. They will be eligible for a one-off £1000 payment in December which will be paid on top on the existing grants for businesses. Eligible businesses will be required to complete an application form and payments will be made shortly.

*Additional Restriction Grant (ARG)* – In addition to the above funding, NNDC has received £2,096,740 as a one-off sum to provide additional support for

businesses over the next two financial years. Whilst the initial focus has been concentrated on ensuring the swift delivery of the LRSG grants, the Council will shortly identify an element of the ARG fund to provide for a discretionary grant scheme to support certain businesses that, for a number of reasons, may not have been able to access the LRSG funding.

### **North Walsham Town Centre Heritage Action Zone**

A number of key activities have commenced including:

- a condition survey on The Cedars with a scoping report to follow;
- a Communication Strategy;
- the formulation of a community engagement plan;
- a draft tender brief for the design of the Town Centre Place making initiative;
- a funding bid for the Cultural Consortium;
- a risk workshop and updated Risk Register;
- a Stakeholder Group meeting.

### **Visitor economy**

#### *Tourism Sector Support Grant*

The Council received almost 80 applications to the North Norfolk Tourism Sector Support Fund. The standard of applications – for projects and initiatives and winter adaptations – was good and almost half were invited to provide a more detailed Full Application. The Grant Panel have now met and have approved 29 projects for a total value of £138,769.14.

### **European Union Transition**

From 1 January 2021 businesses that deal with Europe will have to follow new rules on exports, imports, tariffs, data and hiring. Presently 49% of the UK's international trade is with the EU. The Government has provided guidance for businesses that feel that this may directly affect them ([found here](#)). Whilst our local partners (notably the Norfolk Chamber of Commerce and the New Anglia LEP) have and will play a supporting role in the transition, it has been notable that the Council has received very few enquiries directly about this. Whilst we are aware that some of our larger businesses do conduct trade with Europe, they have to date raised little concern or at least appear to be appropriately informed of the changes. However, we are equally aware that the pandemic has meant that many businesses are otherwise focused on general survival during these challenging times. Should businesses present concern regarding the transition (pre or post 1 January 2021), the Economic Growth Team will be happy to signpost to the appropriate support or information.

## **2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.**

### **Kickstart Job Support Programme**

This initiative, led by DWP, will provide funding for the creation of job

placements for 16 to 24-year olds, the age group identified as most at risk of long-term unemployment as a result of the pandemic. NNDC has successfully applied to be a 'Gateway' organisation, working with businesses and partners to deliver a local scheme for the north Norfolk District. The Council has now made two applications to the DWP, having received over 100 expressions of interest for placements from local businesses. The first application for the initial cohort has just been approved and work is now being undertaken to progress these which will include acquiring job descriptions for the new roles and ensuring that suitable contractual, employability support and general working arrangements are in place to support the placements.

**3 Meetings attended**