

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

21 July 2021

COUNCILLOR RICHARD KERSHAW - CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

For the period June to July 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Business as usual activity Engagement with businesses

The usual engagement with businesses has been maintained, albeit that the normal level of site visits have not been conducted. 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 Support Grants

Following the national restrictions in November/December, the Government committed to providing further grant funding which would again be delivered by Local Authorities. The subsequent tier changes in December, and the announcement of further national restrictions from January onwards, has resulted in a wide a range of grants being delivered by the Council, detailed at follows.

Grant Scheme	Total Businesses paid	Total Value paid £
Small Business Grant Fund	3,514	35,140,000
Retail, Leisure & Tourist Grant Fund	1,340	18,335,000
Discretionary Grant	221	2,760,000
LRSB (Closed) Addendum Grant for 5/11/20-2/12/20	3,496	4,963,110.00
LRSB (Closed) Tier 2 Grant for 2/12/20-26/12/20.	48	66,018.96
LRSB (Open) Tier 2 Grant for 2/12/20-26/12/20.	2,549	2,658,178.46
LRSB (Closed) Tier 4 Grant for 26/12/20-05/01/20.	3,528	1,788,266.48
Christmas Support Payments (Wet-Led Pubs).	70	70,000.00
LRSB (3rd national lockdown 6 weeks payment) 5/1/20 to 15/02/21.	3,525	7,503,693.00
Closed Business Lockdown (Top up Payment)	3,524	14,999,000.00

New LRSG (4th national lockdown 6 weeks plus 2 days payment) 16/02/21 to 31/03/21.	3,529	7,872,162.00
Restart Grant 1/4/21 onwards	3,536	27,088,147.00
Additional Restrictions Grant	476	3,028,068
Total	29,356	126,271,643.90

All of these schemes have now closed, with the Restart Grant being the last mandatory scheme, with a confirmed final payment date of 31 July 2021.

In addition to the mandatory schemes, the Council also awarded discretionary funding to businesses via the Discretionary Grant in 2020 and the Additional Restrictions Grants (ARG) scheme in 2021. In respect to the ARG, Local Authorities were advised that their allocation needed to be fully defrayed by 30 June (subsequently extended by a month) in order to qualify for the top-up funding that was announced in the spring budget. NNDC has now fully defrayed its ARG allocation and therefore is anticipating a top up allocation of £760,411 by the end of July. Plans are presently in progress to develop a further grant scheme and other business support using this funding.

North Norfolk District Council has been shortlisted in the [2021 Public Finance Awards](#) in the category of *Digital Finance Project of the Year*, recognising an exceptional performance in the issuing of COVID-19 business grants to sectors in the District affected by the pandemic.

North Walsham Town Centre Heritage Action Zone

A number of key activities have commenced/are presently being undertaken including:

- A series of necessary surveys have been conducted on The Cedars to understand its condition and the work required to repair and restore the main building so that it can be let to businesses and/or organisations seeking a base in the town. Detailed design work is now being completed. Procurement will then take place to appoint contractors to carry out the repairs and restoration work required, with an anticipation of the Cedars being brought back into use soon;
- Key stakeholder engagement workshops about the programme were held on 20 April and 27 May;
- A virtual community engagement platform has been established to share news about the programme and elicit feedback. The use of this site has been encouraging, with 569 'page views', 103 'unique users', and an average visit time of approximately four minutes, in the week commencing 28th June;
- On 16/17 June a public interactive exhibition was held in the town centre (this was followed up on the evening of 23rd June for those unable to make the former dates). These provided the opportunity for local people and businesses to engage and share their thoughts on the draft masterplan and initial concept designs for the place making scheme;

- The place-making work stream will now move into the 'developed design' phase which will finalise preferred options informed by stakeholder engagement.

Visitor Economy

The Council has continued to maintain a close relationship with Visit North Norfolk and collaboration on messaging has been central to the response to the pandemic and recovery planning for the local visitor economy. This has helped keep the sector informed and has encouraged greater collaboration and support for collective action. The Council has also liaised closely with NALEP and other Norfolk and Suffolk local authorities and Destination Management Organisations, through collaboration with Visit East of England.

The announcement of the third lockdown created a natural hiatus in the immediate promotion of north Norfolk, in accordance with national restrictions to which people were asked to stay local. However, the marketing campaign has now recommenced and the latest Top Things to do on Holiday in North Norfolk film has now gone live and can be found at www.visitnorthnorfolk.com. The film is being promoted through ads on FB, Instagram and Google Remarketing

Whilst we envisage a strong uplift in 'staycation' visits to the district, we will continue to act in line with all Government advice as Covid-19 restrictions are further eased. This will be supported by the promotion of NNDC's new Stay COVID Safe award scheme

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Key activities:

- Development of grants/package of wider business support (funded through the ARG top up fund)
- Continue to support the North Norfolk Kickstart Gateway programme to help 16-14yrs old into employment
- Continued development of the North Walsham HAZ virtual platform to support community engagement

3 Meetings attended

NW HAZ weekly meetings
 MHCLG briefings
 Recovery Co-ordination weekly meetings
 Development Committee
 Community Renewal Grant meetings

Strategic Stakeholders meetings
Sands Agricultural site meeting
PC Meetings.