

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

09 February 2022

COUNCILLOR R KERSHAW - CABINET MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

For the period November to December 2021

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Covid-19 Business Support – additional funding

The Council has distributed over £126m in Covid-related business grants. At the Spring Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that Local Authorities could receive an additional top-up to the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) allocation (amounting to £760,411 for north Norfolk). In order to qualify, Councils needed to have fully defrayed all of their previous allocation by 30 June 2021 (subsequently extended by one month in line with the national restrictions extension), which the Council was successful in doing.

Utilising the ARG top-up allocation, following Cabinet approval, the Council has developed a programme of business support, including:

- A 'Business Recovery & Resilience Grant Scheme' (BRRG);
- Supporting business digitalisation (through investing in the 'Go Digital' programme);
- Collaborating with Visit Norfolk Norfolk to support visitor economy businesses with marketing and workforce/skills support;
- Developing a programme for the care sector to support career pathways into social care.

The BRRG scheme has received 46 applications, for a project value of £1.1 million approx and grant value of £497,647.55 to date. £276,093.03 of grants have been awarded.

A delivery partner has now been appointed for the Business Support Social Care Recruitment project. This programme will provide:

- Bespoke training - bringing together the Care Certificate, the general induction standards for anyone new to care and sessions covering key topics such as Infection Prevention Control, Fire and Safety and Moving and Positioning;
- Opportunities for candidates to continue learning and undertaking accredited training post sector based work programme
- Access for employers to the fast track induction training when they take on a new member of staff;
- Mentoring for candidates for the first month with a training provider – an opportunity to discuss with a trainer involved in the programme issues/concerns in the first 4 weeks of employment/finding employment;
- Support for employers with access to training and resources to support the new recruit including ESF funded training;
- An evaluation summary of the experience – to provide promotional material for other courses.

North Walsham Town Centre Heritage Action Zone

A number of key activities have commenced/are presently being undertaken, summarised as follows.

- The tender contract to carry out the repairs and restoration work required to bring the Cedars back occupiable use closed on 29 November and responses are presently being reviewed. Potential future users are being solicited via a marketing campaign.
- Between 20 September 2021 and 15 October 2021 a wide range of community engagement activities were undertaken to share the design proposals, invite feedback and to inform the final designs. Feedback from local resident has confirmed that many people who use the town centre are in favour of making it more safe and accessible, encouraging active travel, and improving the public realm through greening and creating areas for rest and relaxation. A report of the findings is presently being prepared which the Council will seek to share and advise on the next steps .
- The Building Improvement Grant scheme is now open to applications. Details can be found at: [Social Pinpoint | Building Improvement Grant \(mysocialpinpoint.co.uk\)](https://mysocialpinpoint.co.uk). An accredited Conservation Architecture firm has recently been appointed to support the scheme and to ensure the effective delivery of the funds to support a number of identified key projects.

Visitor Economy

The Council has continued to collaborate with Visit North Norfolk and to liaise closely with Visit Norfolk and other local authorities and Destination Management Organisations in the region. This has helped keep local tourism businesses informed and has encouraged greater collaboration and support for collective action. Visit North Norfolk's campaign for November and December is 'Wild and Natural North Norfolk'. This can be found on the VNN [home page](#), [YouTube](#) and the accompanying [blog](#)

The film and blog will be promoted via ads on Facebook, Instagram and Google Remarketing as well as e-comms to a database of around 30,000 consumers.

A film is also being promoted which showcases North Norfolk's Christmas events and activities including those at Cromer Pier, Sheringham Little Theatre, Holkham Hall and the Thursford Christmas spectacular.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

- Delivery of grants/package of wider business support (funded through the ARG top up fund).
- VNN new website to go live in January. The Economic Growth team will shortly implement a membership grant scheme to help businesses to promote their business.
- Continue to support the North Norfolk Kickstart Gateway programme to help 16-14yrs old into employment
- Finalise and publish the HAZ place making consultation report and progress designs