

Borough Council of
**King's Lynn &
West Norfolk**



COUNCIL MEETING

Agenda

Thursday, 18th October, 2018
at 6.30 pm

in the

**Assembly Room
Town Hall
Saturday Market Place
King's Lynn**



King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 1EX
Telephone: 01553 616200
Fax: 01553 691663

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the **Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk** which will commence at **6.30 pm** on **Thursday, 18th October, 2018** in **The Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn** to transact the business shown below.

Yours sincerely

Ray Harding
Chief Executive

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

1. PRAYERS

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 6 September 2018 (previously circulated).

4. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Please indicate if there are any interests which should be declared. A declaration of an interest should indicate the nature of the interest (if not already declared on the Register of Interests) and the agenda item to which it relates. If a disclosable pecuniary interest is declared, the member should withdraw from the room whilst the matter is discussed.

5. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive Mayor's communications and announcements.

6. URGENT BUSINESS

To receive any items of business which in the opinion of the Mayor are urgent.

7. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

To receive petitions and public questions in accordance with Standing Order 9.

8. CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS

In accordance with Standing Order 11.1 to receive reports from Cabinet Members in the following order and under Standing Order 11.2 (a) Members of the Council may ask questions of the Cabinet Member on their reports and Portfolio areas:

(Councillors are reminded that this is a question and answer session not a debate.)

- 1) **Corporate Projects and Assets - Councillor A Beales** (Pages 1 - 3)
- 2) **Development - Councillor R Blunt** (Pages 4 - 6)
- 3) **Housing and Community - Councillor A Lawrence** (Pages 7 - 8)
- 4) **Environment - Councillor I Devereux** (Pages 9 - 10)
- 5) **Facilities and IT - Councillor Mrs K Mellish** (Pages 11 - 12)
- 6) **Performance & Economic Development - Councillor P Hodson** (Page 13)
- 7) **Deputy Leader and Culture, Heritage and Health - Councillor Mrs E Nockolds** (Pages 14 - 16)
- 8) **Leader and Resources - Councillor B Long** (Pages 17 - 19)

9. MEMBERS QUESTION TIME

In accordance with Standing Order 11.2 (b), Members of the Council may ask any questions of the Chairman of any Council Body (except the Cabinet).

10. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCIL BODIES

(Members are reminded this is a debate, not a question and answer session)

To consider the following recommendations to Council:

- 1) **Cabinet: 2 October 2018** (Page 20)

Ray Harding
Chief Executive

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**18 October 2018****COUNCILLOR ALISTAIR BEALES - CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE PROJECTS & ASSETS**

For the period 6 September to ...

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Members may recall that in order to develop the Enterprise Zone site on the Nar Ouse Regeneration Area that a high pressure gas main had to be diverted. The picture below shows the new pipe connected to the existing pipe adjacent to the cemetery to the north of the site. To date the project has gone to programme and is due to be completed sometime in November 2018.



On Wednesday 3rd October, I spent the day visiting the development sites that are being developed as part of the Major Housing Scheme. This had been organised by Dale Gagen, the Council's Corporate Project Manager and we were accompanied by representatives of Lovells, our private sector partners in the shape of the Regional Managing Director and Regional Operations Director. Sites visited as follows:

- Marsh Lane – this 130 home site is progressing well and the eastern end around the orchard is nearing completion with many homes now sold and occupied and a real sense of community beginning to emerge. The main access road through the site will soon be open to traffic which will see the northern and southern sections of Marsh Lane come together as one through route as was always intended.
- Dewside (Lynnport 4 & 5 along Green Park Avenue) has seen show homes opened in the last few weeks and early sales enquiries are encouraging. This 89 home site offers a more contemporary design and is well placed for the open green spaces and facilities of Lynnport.
- NORA phase 3 – this 50 homes site, 2, 3 and 4 bed homes with a handful of 5 beds of which 42 are open market and 8 rented and shared ownership is due for completion in spring 2019. The completion of this last phase of the original NORA site sees a changed landscape from run down waste land to pleasant riverside neighbourhood.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Work has started on the NORA 4 site to enable future development of 95 modular homes. The near 7 acre site is currently being decontaminated which requires the whole site to be dug down to some 3 metres, all soil/subsoil put through a crusher to sort and enable removal of steel and concrete from old shed bases, piles etc. Most soil is then replaced on site and during late stages of development will be covered with geotextile membrane and covered over with a metre or so of clean soil brought onto site. The largest pieces of concrete (some 3 metres thick in places) are being removed and tipped separately for crushing at a later date using a larger crusher. All crushed concrete, (a few thousand tonnes of it), will be re-used on site for road bases etc. Such remediation is of course expensive, and a discount was negotiated from the purchase price of the land for this very reason with circa £840K in the budget to remediate this site. In addition, this is one of the developments that will benefit from Accelerated Construction Programme monies, which on this site is worth circa £1.2 million.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

10/9/18 – Portfolio briefing
 10/9/18 – Corporate Performance Panel
 11/9/18 – Hunstanton Southern Seafront Project Board
 11/9/18 – Wayne Hemingway walk around Hunstanton
 11/9/18 – Regeneration & Development Panel
 18/9/18 – Special Cabinet
 19/9/18 – meeting with leaseholders of Princess Theatre, Hunstanton.

21/9/18 – meeting with NWES Chief Exec
21/9/18 – meeting with Leader of the Council
2/10/18 – Cabinet (apologies given)
3/10/18 – Major Housing Scheme site visits
11/10/18 – Environment & Community Panel
15/10/18 – portfolio briefing
17/10/18 – Special Cabinet

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

18 October 2018

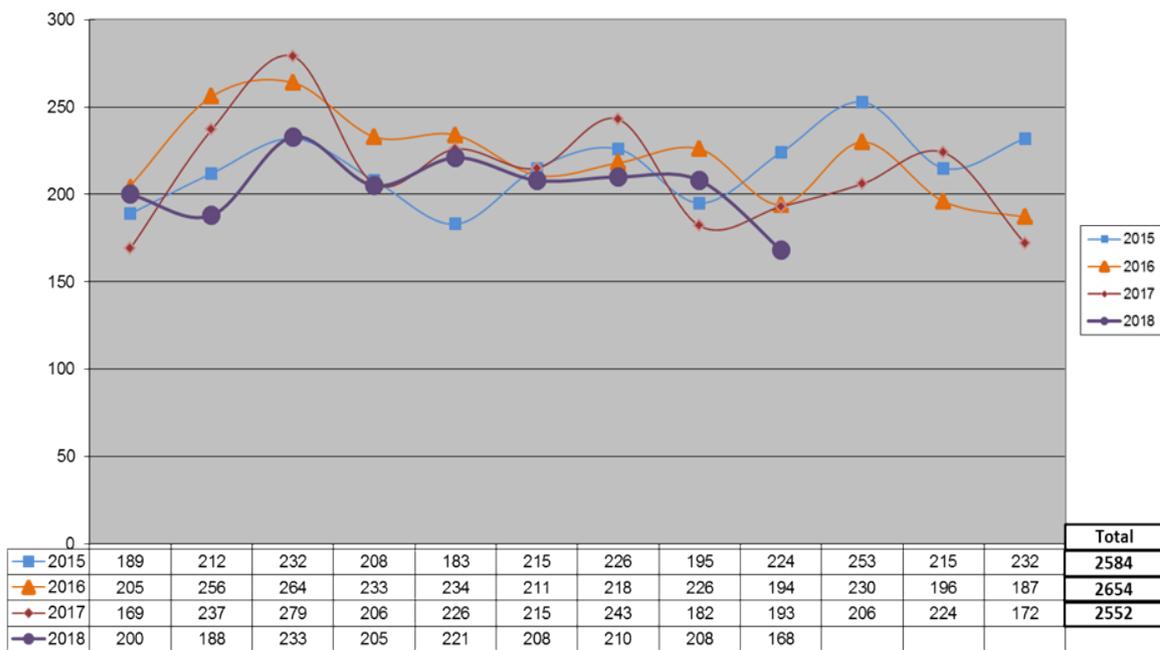
COUNCILLOR RICHARD BLUNT - CABINET MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT

For the period 6 September 2018 to 8 October 2018

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Planning Applications

Planning and discharge of condition applications received



Planning Applications

Although we saw a drop in applications last month and the accumulative position to date is about 6% down on last year, the application fees are ahead of budget.

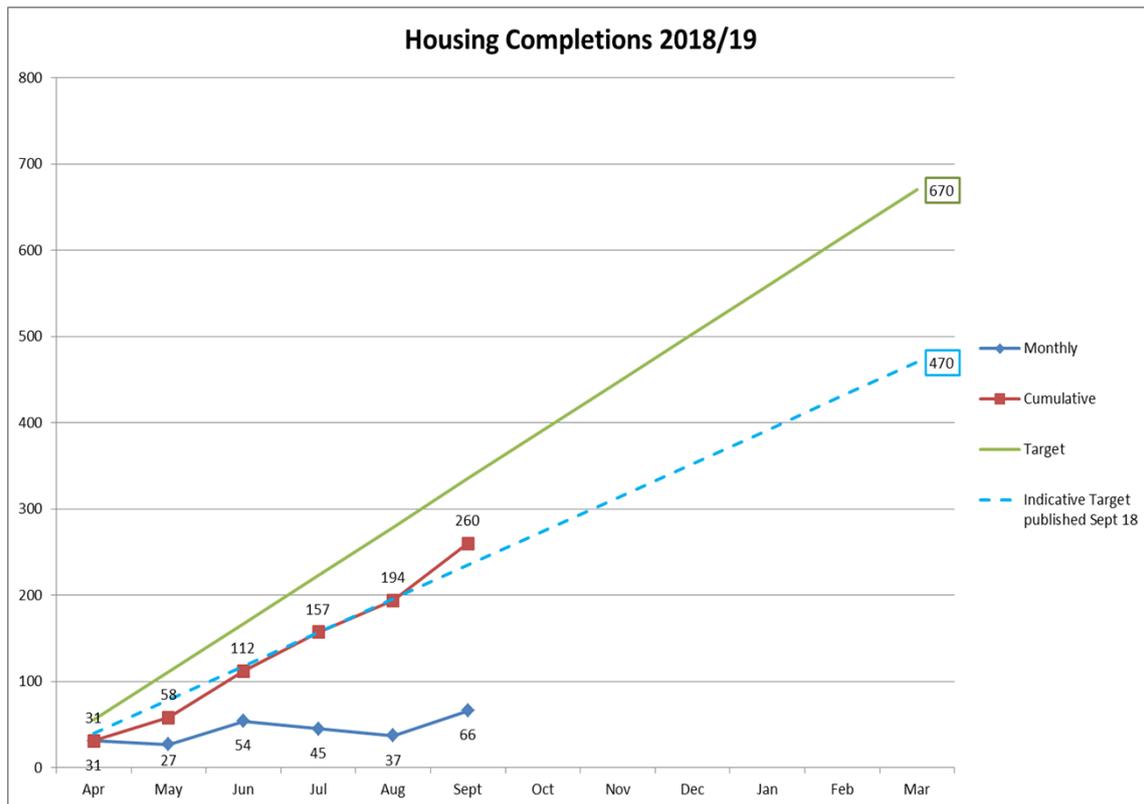
Planning Portal Financial Transaction Service

The introduction of fees (£16.67 + VAT) for the use of the Planning Portal to submit plans commenced last month, meaning that applications made online through the Planning Portal, along with the application fee, will only be released to local authorities once the full planning application fee and the associated submission fee has been paid. There has been some initial

resistance to this Government introduced fee and we have received via email more than normal applications last moth. This has created more work for the application processing section. We are looking at alternative solutions and reviewing internal procedures, but if this trend continues, it is possible application processing will slow especially for application not submitted via the Planning Portal.

We will continue to monitor the impact of this change.

Housing Completions and Housing Delivery Test



Housing Completions and Housing Delivery Test (HDT)

The chart has been revised to show the current published target for the Borough. Although this was announced in mid September, the Government has already announced that it will be revised before the November 2018 HDT is assessed .

NPPF 2

A training session for the Planning Committee on the impact of the latest National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) published in July, was made on Monday 8th October. The training session focused on how the new NPPF will effect current applications as well as the new issues that will have to be considered in the next Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Plans

The Snettisham Neighbourhood Plan has completed the examination phase. Following detailed discussions with Snettisham Neighbourhood plan group, it is expected that the plan will go to referendum in the next few weeks.

Meetings Attended

Cabinet Sifting

Cabinet

Various meetings with Officer

Local Plan Task Group

Custom and Self Build Task Group

Snettisham Neighbourhood Plan Group

Joint Portfolio Meeting

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**18 October 2018****COUNCILLOR ADRIAN LAWRENCE- CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY**

For the period 6 September to 9 October 2018

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**HMO's**

Changes to mandatory licensing for landlords who provide a house in multiple occupation (HMO) came into force on 1 October 2018.

Under the new legislation, landlords of any residential rental properties which have two or more households, and a total of five people or more, will need to apply for a mandatory HMO licence. The new approach replaces and expands on the previous HMO regulations by no longer limiting licensing to HMOs that are three or more storeys high but, instead, applying to all HMOs with five or more occupants. The move, which affects around 160,000 HMOs across the UK, means councils can take further action to crack down on the small minority of landlords renting out sub-standard and overcrowded homes and help ensure they're fit for purpose. Within the scope of the new licensing powers, all local authorities will also ensure bedrooms are a minimum size and the property complies with household waste and recycling procedures.

Housing Standards have over recent weeks received ten new licence applications and they are currently being processed. The Council have issued a number of press releases, including social media releases, to advise landlords of the changes to the regulations and Housing Standards will also be advising landlords as to the new requirements at a landlord's forum to be held on the 1st November 2018.

Gas Safety

Following an initial investigation by Housing Standards a landlord has been fined for failing to maintain gas appliances at a rental property and repeatedly failing to provide tenants with a Landlords Gas Safety Certificate.

Norwich Magistrates Court heard how inspectors from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Gas Safe Register found the gas oven to be 'at risk' and the gas central heating boiler to be unsafe to use when they visited the Kings Lynn property during 2017. The subsequent HSE investigation found that the landlord, had failed in his duty to have the gas appliances regularly inspected or maintained and failed to provide a Landlords Gas Safety Certificate for a number of years, all of which are legal requirements.

The landlord pleaded guilty to breaching Section 21 of the Health & Safety Work etc. Act 1974 and breaching Regulation 36(2) and Regulation 36(3) of the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998. He received a 20 week custodial sentence, suspended for 2 years, and was ordered to carry out 100 hours of unpaid community work and to pay full costs of £4146.34.

West Norfolk Housing Co. Ltd update.

Although later than expected due to constitutional changes that were required I am pleased to say that the application of the West Norfolk Housing Co. has been approved by the Regulator of Social Housing. The company can now meet its objectives for the benefit of our community, and access funding opportunities from central government.

We will be launching the first scheme at Broad Street later in the month, providing much needed quality self-contained accommodation for homeless households later this month.

Home Choice

205 new applications/change of circumstances – the forms were unavailable at the end of September due to maintenance which accounts for the drop in numbers

1094 live applications

188 high
317 medium
589 low

39 housed

2 Meetings Attended

Full Council
Cabinet
Special Cabinet
Cabinet Sifting
Meetings with Officers

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**18 October 2018****COUNCILLOR IAN DEVEREUX-CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

For the period 6 September to 8 October

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Our Air Quality Annual Status Report 2018 was completed and now approved by DEFRA. There was a general downward trend in NO₂ (Nitrous Oxide), despite one reported exceedance of the air quality standard at Railway Road within one of our designated Air Quality Management Areas. There were no exceedances of the PM₁₀ (particulate) annual mean objectives. The results confirm the effectiveness of our management arrangements and will contribute to the ongoing Kings Lynn Transportation Study and Strategy.

As previously declared in response to Community concerns, I raised the issue of Fly-Tipping at the recent Norfolk Waste Partnership Board and found much support from other Waste Collection Authorities. However, the evidence was that they too had experienced year-on-year reductions in Fly-Tipping since the introduction of the new charges at the NCC run Home Waste Recycling Centres. Nonetheless, it was also agreed that the levels were too high and causing over £1m of potentially avoidable cost to Councils across the County. The agreed outcome was for development of a new Enforcement based campaign in conjunction with other stakeholders including the Environment Agency, Police, Landowners and the Judiciary. I will keep Members informed as the programme develops.

Recent press coverage indicates that despite the continued proactive North Lynn, Loke Road community efforts to reduce fly-tipping and illegal waste dumping on their private property, new incidents are occurring in the George Street area. Our Council Teams are continuing their efforts to identify the perpetrators and provide equipment and support to local communities as requested.

I have reviewed the Contract provisions for the ongoing Waste Procurement and commented to the Team.

Following questions raised at the Single Use Plastics Working Group and in recent Council, it is to be noted that the matter will feature in forthcoming Government Consultations and their 2019 Legislative Programme. I will keep Members briefed on the opportunities as the programme timetable develops.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Signing of the Partnership Agreement between the North Norfolk, Breckland and KL&WN Councils for the new Waste Contract is expected in October.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Council
CPP
Alive Leisure Trust Interview, AGM and Board Meeting
R&D at Hunstanton
Cabinet and Briefings
Waste Recycling Road Show in Hunstanton
Norfolk Waste Partnership Board at Breckland DC
Anglian (Central) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee at Denver Sluice
ICT Development

Scheduled

East of Ouse, Nar and Polver Internal Drainage Board
Anglian (Central) Regional Flood & Coastal Committee at Brampton
Norfolk Coastal Partnership Core Management Group at Sculthorpe
E&C

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**18 October 2018****COUNCILLOR MRS KATHY MELLISH - CABINET MEMBER FOR FACILITIES AND ICT**

For the period 7 September to 18 October 2018

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Both Mintlyn Crematorium and Hardwick Cemetery – amongst other sites, were Gold award and Green Flag winners in this years Anglia in Bloom competition. Both were also eligible for the People’s Choice award and I wish them good luck for this. The gardens across the sites are a credit to the work put in by the team and provide a restful relaxing space to be in at a time when people require quiet contemplation.

Parking at school entrances. This must be raised as an item of concern as we often receive requests for enforcement officers to be available at collection time all around our area once the new term begins. This is not a new problem but raises its head on a regular basis. There is a safety issue when roads or pathways are blocked, and visibility is limited. Residents living next to or near schools are blocked from entering or leaving their driveways and people become stressed trying to find a space to park next to the school gate. Please could I ask that parents or carers try to walk their children to school, or, if they live too far away, park away from the school entrance and instead walk some way to the drop off point. Think about the effect parking has on the area and the environmental impact of short journeys twice a day. It is worth the walk if possible, as it is beneficial to you and your children’s health and less costly than running the car and all that this involves.

We will shortly be adding a new service to the website for Taxi Drivers. They will be able to renew their combined driver and vehicle licence through our online account in the ‘My Account’ section. By registering for an account, the taxi driver will be able to:

Access our services 24/7, 365 days a year.

View information held on our back-office system, check when their licence is due for renewal and report changes.

It will allow them to complete the process more quickly and easily, as the forms are simpler and allow a payment and documentation to be provided. They will be able to complete the forms in the comfort of their own home or office using a PC, laptop, smartphone or tablet, avoiding the need to call or visit the office.

Stop and start the forms at any point and once complete they will be able to track its progress.

As part of the implementation, some of the online forms will automatically update the back-office system, saving time for back office staff and reducing the potential for error.

By introducing the new online service, we can enhance the taxi drivers experience, improve processing times and prevent unnecessary delays.

This would probably be a good time to also remind everyone to register for 'My Account' on the website as you can access a great deal of information relevant to you, especially bin collection days, which is one area I regularly need as I can never remember which bin is due for collection each week.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Regular meetings with Officers and Executive Directors

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Officer meetings
Cabinet meeting and Portfolio updates
Norfolk Parking Partnership meeting County Hall
Cabinet Sifting

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL
18 October 2018

COUNCILLOR PETER HODSON - CABINET MEMBER FOR PERFORMANCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

For the period 6 September to 9 October 2018

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

International Aerospace Academy RAF Marham (IAA-M)

The project appraisal has been completed and the borough council is working with the Aviation Skills Partnership (ASP) on preparing a bid to be submitted to the Local Enterprise Partnerships' Growth Deal Fund in October. IAA-M follows Norwich, RAF Syerston and RAF Cosford as 'first of kind' Academies for the United Kingdom by providing the complete integration of education, training and industry pathways for the aerospace and aviation industry. Aviation Skills Partnership (ASP) has identified six areas of aerospace skills and aviation skills requirements and the IAA-M will provide pathways through school, college and university for all skills levels and for all job types.

Hunstanton Southern Seafront.

Hemingway Design are well underway with the masterplanning study of the Southern Seafront area, an online portal was launched in August inviting the public to suggest and respond to the initial ideas and suggestions put forward by Hemingway Design. The portal is due to close on 14th October and the results will inform the masterplan options to be developed by Hemingway Design. Public consultation on the option is anticipated in early 2019.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Cabinet Meeting
 Cabinet Sifting
 Coastal Community Meeting
 Hunstanton Coastal team meeting
 Martin Chisholm
 Ostap Paparega
 R & D Panel Meeting
 Portfolio Meeting
 Chris Bamfield
 Watlington Wildlife Park Developers
 Paul Harrison

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

18 October 2018

**COUNCILLOR MRS EA NOCKOLDS
CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, HERITAGE & HEALTH**

For the period 6th September to 12th October 2018

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Fields in Trust are currently leading a national initiative on Centenary Fields aimed at securing recreational spaces in perpetuity in honour of the memory of those who lost their lives in the WW1. The Council has entered into an arrangement with Fields in Trust and committed the Tower Gardens to a Deed of Dedication. As there are a number of war memorials located in the Tower Gardens the Deed of Dedication will enable the Council to support its Armed Forces Covenant.

To enable other groups in west Norfolk to commemorate the ending of the WW1 the Council has given small grants to 20 villages and community groups towards events, cleaning memorials, research and exhibitions.

As mentioned in my last months report 600 children have taken part in the 'Return to the Battlefields' project at the Stories of Lynn, in partnership with the KL British Legion, which will be installed at the Tower Gardens. Part of the project includes 2 'There but not There' Tommies installed on a plinth with uplighters which will be unveiled by the Mayor. The Council are working in partnership with Tin Fish Creatives who are creating a projection on the Greyfriars Tower which will include Tommys silhouettes.

A gas beacon has also been built which will be installed at the Kings Staithe Square raised area ready for lighting on the evening of the 11th November.

To celebrate the 100th year of the RAF a light projection has been designed to be shown on the Customs House. It will be a video projection of interactive games. The launch of the projection will be ready for the schools half term holiday. A storyboard of the 100 years of the RAF will also be projected on the TSB building at a later date.

Our Tourism Dept is now working towards the 2019 campaign, offering accommodation providers the opportunity to advertise in the WN Holiday Guide brochure and the visit west Norfolk website and mobile phone App. West Norfolk advertisers also qualify for 12months free membership of Visit East Anglia web site.

A recent report from the Economic Impact of Tourism in west Norfolk shows an increase of 2.9%, (10,632), of actual jobs from 2016 to 2017 which are

created through Tourism.

Norfolk Museums Service has received funding from the Government's Coastal Communities Fund to promote sustainable tourism and new ways of accessing the wealth of heritage in the coastal area between Kings Lynn and Burnham Market. The project named, 'Coastal Treasures', will develop walking and cycling trails using modern technology to bring heritage assets to life, such as the Seahenge and Snettisham Iron Torcs. Two Teaching Museum trainees are designing the trails and are funded via the project. The Coastal Treasures project aims to complement the WN Rural Churches Trails for which the Council received funding from the EU Leader grant. This project was reported in my last Council report.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

The SLA between the Council and the Lynn Museum is providing free admission to visitors until end of March. During this month on each Wednesday the Museum is offering a programme of afternoon talks, and the 4th Wednesday of each month Coffee, Cake and Collections mornings are organised. A new programme to encourage parents and under 5's to visit the Museum has been launched.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Portfolio meetings with

Ray Harding Chief Executive
Lorraine Gore Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Finance
Chris Bamfield Director of Commercial Services
Claire Thompsett Grounds & Open Space
Roger Partridge Heritage Gardens Outreach Officer
Undina Reinfelde WN Tourism Trails Dev. Officer
Norfolk Museums Coastal Treasures Dev. Officers
Karen Robson LILY Co-ordinator

Cabinet

Regeneration & Development Panel

Environment & Community Panel

Norfolk Arts Forum

Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant Board

NCC Walking & Cycling Working Party

NHS WNCCG Primary Care Commissioning Committee

Anglia In Bloom Presentations

KL Internal Drainage Board

Alive Management Board

Alive Leisure Trust AGM

KL & WN Cultural Board Meeting

Friends of Lynn Museum AGM

The Garage Performing Arts Norwich

WN & KL School Girls Trust

WN Community Transport

Norfolk Relate

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**18 October 2018****COUNCILLOR BRIAN LONG – LEADER & CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES**

For the period 6 September to 8 October 2018.

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**August Monitoring Report**

As at 31/8/18 the monthly budget monitoring report noted a favourable variance of £30,350. As per previous months this amount has been included into balances that are accruing to fund revenue cost pressures budgeted for 2020/21.

I am pleased to announce turnover savings of £106,290 have been achieved so far against a target of £125,866 for the whole year.

I will continue to advise council as the year progresses of any further changes.

Energy Efficiency

The Salix energy efficiency project has now ended. Following the end of this agreement the budgeted contributions to the energy efficiency reserve are now no longer required and as such a saving of £21,100 was included within this month's monitoring report. We will of course continue with the schemes started utilising the Salix funding and going forward will utilise the REFIT project for energy saving measures. This has advantages of allowing a longer payback period than the Salix scheme.

Staff Wellbeing

This year as previous years' staff and members have had the opportunity to have a "flu jab" either at the office or by obtaining a voucher to use at Boots Chemist. This year take up was good with 121 having the injection in the office and 61 vouchers being issued.

It is noteworthy that variety of Jab this year meant that staff and members over 65 had to have a different vaccine, which was not available via the scheme, however over 65s do qualify for a flu jab from their doctors.

Emergency Planning

This month I took a day out of the office to be involved with “Operation Springboard” a multi-agency training exercise for Emergency Planning. The exercise concentrated on the recovery phase after a tidal surge and extreme weather event effecting the whole East Coast. The benefits of such a process do allow each agency to think and plan should anything of this nature occur. Preparation and readiness for such events are an important in how deal with the real emergencies as they unfold.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Housing Borrowing Cap

It was announced at the Conservative Party Conference that the borrowing cap for Local Councils to invest in Social Housing stock is to be lifted. This will enable new build Council Housing Stock to be built. I will of course advise as further detail becomes available.

Negative Revenue Support Grant

For several District Councils the revenue support grant received from Central Government was not just going to be reduced to zero over the next few years but was due to become a payment back to Central Government. Following ongoing negotiations and support from the District Councils Network, Government has indicated that “Negative RSG” is now not going to happen. Again I will advise as further detail comes available.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

In addition to my usual round of Cabinet and Portfolio meetings I have also attended the following:

Mini Meet In The Market Place
Classic Car Day
Hunstanton Soap Box Derby
Discovery Centre Open Day for Freebridge Community Housing
Environment and Community Panel
Regeneration and Development Panel
Protected Landscape and Planning Conference
Meetings with Sir Henry Bellingham MP
Norfolk Leaders Meeting
Kings Lynn area consultative Committee
Kings Lynn Internal Drainage Board
Norfolk Enterprise Festival

Various Meetings - Freebridge Community Housing
Water Management Alliance
Norfolk Emergency Planning Exercise
Mayors Design Awards
Meeting with Hunstanton Mayor
Meeting with Downham Market Mayor
Yes I can Event

RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET ON 2 OCTOBER 2018 TO COUNCIL ON 18 OCTOBER 2018

CAB70: COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS 2019/20

Cabinet considered a report which covered three proposed changes to Council Tax discounts for 2018/2019 and 2019/2020. The first was a review of the one month, 100% discount for empty and unfurnished properties. The second was the increased premiums payable for long term empty properties. The third was the introduction of a 100% discount for care leavers. The first two changes were proposed to take effect starting from 1 April 2019, with the Care Leavers' discount starting from 1 April 2018. The report also covered a change to the delegated authority for considering individual discount applications.

The Corporate Performance Panel at its meeting on 10 September 2018 had considered the report and commented that relating to the Care Leavers discount, it indicated that when a carer leaver moved in with a single household who then lost their single resident discount then it might be considered to extend a care leaver discount to that residence and that Cabinet be asked to consider this when determining the decision. This point had been incorporated into the proposals.

In response to questions relating to the potential exclusion of Almshouses with residency criteria which meant the properties may be empty whilst suitable tenants were found, or older properties undergoing renovation which may take longer to carry out than the year permitted under the empty property regime, it was noted that there was a Hardship Fund which individuals could apply to.

The recommendation to remove the one month discount, and the high costs in officer time of the administration of the discount were discussed.

The Cabinet fully supported the comments from the Corporate Performance Panel regarding the disregarding of care leavers moving into properties.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the proposal to remove the one month 100% discount for empty and unfurnished properties from 1 April 2019 be approved.
2) That the maximum increases to the long term empty property premium starting from 1 April 2019 be approved.
3) That the introduction of the Care Leavers' local discount from 1 April 2018 on the criteria listed in the report be approved.
4) That the wording for delegated authority for individual applications be amended to "Applications will be determined by the Revenues and Benefits Manager in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Performance and the relevant Ward Member".

Reasons for Decisions

To ensure council tax discounts are reviewed and updated in line with recent changes and to take into account the comments from the Corporate Performance Panel.