

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



COUNCIL MEETING

Agenda

Wednesday, 31st January, 2024
at 5.00 pm

In the Assembly Room
Town Hall
Saturday Market Place
King's Lynn

Available for the public to view on [WestNorfolkBC on You Tube](#)



King's Court, Chapel Street, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 1EX
Telephone: 01553 616200
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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 **5.00 pm** on **Wednesday, 31st January, 2024** in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn to transact the business shown below.

Yours sincerely

Lorraine Gore
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 23 November 2023 (previously circulated).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Page 6)

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. REVIEW OF PROPORTIONALITY (Pages 7 - 9)

9. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS (Pages 10 - 12)

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: 5 December 2023 (Pages 13 - 14)

CAB74: Council Tax Support - Final Scheme for 2024-25

2) Cabinet : 15 January 2024 (Pages 15 - 20)

CAB88: Polling District Review

CAB89: Council Tax Premiums for Long-Term Empty Properties and Second Homes

CAB90: Whistle Blowing Policy

CAB91: Designation of a Village Green, South Lynn

CAB93: Appointment of Honorary Aldermen

CAB96: Council Companies Funding

11. NOTICE OF MOTION

To consider the following Notice of Motion (1/24), submitted by Councillor D Sayers:

This council further acknowledges the rich historical tapestry woven by the Royal Charters of 1204, which granted Bishops Lynn the status of a free borough in perpetuity, the reconstitution in 1524, appointing a governance structure consisting of a mayor, twelve aldermen, and eighteen common councilmen, and the renaming of the borough to King's Lynn in 1537.

Building on this esteemed legacy, the council proudly reaffirms the historical significance and close ties our Borough shares with the royal family. Our association with the Sandringham Estate and Anmer House, the country residence of the Prince and Princess of Wales, serves as a testament to our enduring connection to the monarchy.

In light of this heritage, this Council unequivocally resolves to submit an application for the prestigious status of a Royal Borough. Recognising the cultural and historical significance our Borough holds, the Council further resolves that The Royal Names Office shall be approached to facilitate this

application process.

This strategic move is motivated by a collective commitment to strengthening our community's bond with the royal heritage, fostering a profound sense of pride, and fortifying our collective identity. It is a testament to our dedication to preserving and celebrating the rich historical ties that bind our Borough with the monarchy.

12. CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS (Pages 21 - 68)

In accordance with Standing Order 11, to receive reports from Cabinet Members moved en bloc, under Standing Order 11.2 Members of the Council may ask questions of Cabinet Members on their reports and Portfolio areas. The order of putting questions shall commence with a Member from the largest opposition group, proceeding in descending order to the smallest opposition group, followed by a non-aligned Member and finally a Member from the ruling group. This order shall repeat until the time for questions has elapsed or there are no more questions to be put.

The period of time for putting questions and receiving responses shall not exceed 50 minutes for all Cabinet Members, excluding the Leader

The period of time for putting questions and receiving responses to the Leader shall not exceed 15 minutes.

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

Business – Councillor A Beales

Climate Change and Biodiversity – Councillor M de Whalley

Environment and Coastal - Councillor S Squire

Finance – Councillor C Morley

Property & Corporate Services – Councillor B Anota

People and Communities – Councillor J Rust

Tourism Events and Marketing – Cllr S Ring

Deputy Leader Development and Regeneration – Councillor J Moriarty

Leader - Councillor T Parish

13. MEMBERS QUESTION TIME

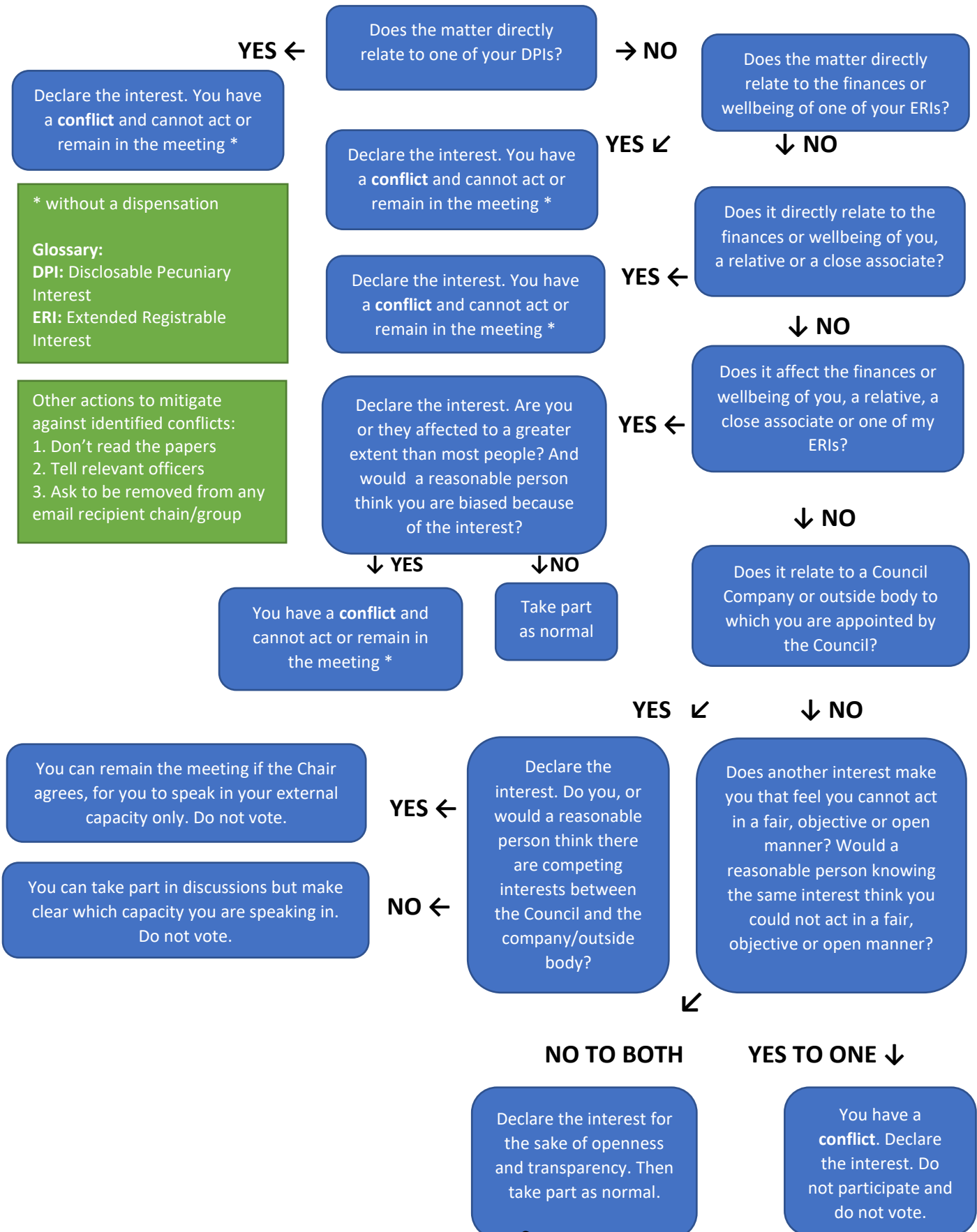
In accordance with Standing Order 11.2 (b), Members of the Council may ask any questions of the Chair of any Council Body (except the Cabinet).

Lorraine Gore
Chief Executive

DECLARING AN INTEREST AND MANAGING ANY CONFLICTS FLOWCHART



START



Declare the interest. You have a **conflict** and cannot act or remain in the meeting *

* without a dispensation

Glossary:

DPI: Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

ERI: Extended Registrable Interest

Other actions to mitigate against identified conflicts:

1. Don't read the papers
2. Tell relevant officers
3. Ask to be removed from any email recipient chain/group

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Lead Officer: Sam Winter E-mail: sam.winter@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 01553 616327			Other Officers consulted: Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer		
Financial Implications NO	Policy/Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications YES	Equality Impact Assessment req'd NO	Risk Management Implications NO	Environmental Implications No

Date of Meeting : 31 January 2024

REVIEW OF PROPORTIONALITY

It is the duty of the Council to review annually the entitlement of political groups to seats on committees in line with the proportionality rules set out in the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. The rules allow adjustments to be made to make whole numbers of seats and, once the Council has determined how adjustments should be made, appointments are made to committees on that basis. When changes are made to Group memberships a further review can be undertaken on request.

As a result of Councillors Kemp and Rose leaving the Independent Partnership to become non aligned members the following changes to proportionality are suggested to Council.

The Independent Partnership lose 2 seats, 1 to the Conservatives and 1 to Labour.

RECOMMENDED: That proportionality be amended by the change of seats as follows:

- 1) That the Independent Partnership lose 1 seat from the Environment and Community Panel to the Conservative Group.**
- 2) The Independent Partnership lose 1 seat from the Regeneration and Development Panel to the Labour Group**

1 Background

The rules around proportionality are as set out below:

- (1) No political group can have all the places on a committee (the exception is the Cabinet).
- (2) A group having an overall majority on the Council is entitled to a majority of seats on each committee.
- (3) The aggregate number of seats across all committees is allocated in accordance with each group's entitlement.

- (4) The number of seats on each committee is allocated in accordance with each group's entitlement.

2 Proportionality Change

Following a change in Group membership across the Council with Councillors Kemp and Rose leaving the Independent Partnership, it has been requested that proportionality be reviewed.

This means that the group numbers are currently 21 Independent Partnership, 21 Conservative and 11 Labour. There are 2 non aligned Members who are not taken into account in the proportionality calculations, but any Group may offer seat/s to those Councillors should they wish.

3 Amended level of Seats Allocated

To take into account the amended proportionality, Council is invited to approve the changes as follows:

That the Independent Partnership lose 1 seat from the Environment and Community Panel to the Conservative Group.

The Independent Partnership lose 1 seat from the Regeneration and Development Panel to the Labour Group

POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY - JANUARY 2024

	Total Membership	Conservative Group	Independent Partnership	Labour Group	Check Total
Total No. of Members	55	21	21	11	55
Appointments Board	9	3	4	2	9
Planning Committee	18	7	7	4	18
Licensing Committee	15	6	6	3	15
Licensing & Appeals Board	15	6	6	3	15
Standards Committee	7	3	3	1	7
Corporate Performance Panel	12	5	5	2	12
Environment & Community Panel	12	5	4	3	12
o Regeneration & Development Panel	12	5	4	3	12
Audit Committee	9	3	4	2	9
Total Seats	109	43	43	23	109

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Lead Member: Leader – Councillor Terry Parish E-mail: cllr.terry.parish@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted:		
		Other Members consulted:		
Lead Officer: Samantha Winter E-mail: sam.winter@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial:01553 616327		Other Officers consulted:		
Financial Implications NO	Policy/Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications (incl S.17) NO	Equalities Impact Assessment NO	Risk Management Implications NO

Date of Meeting: 31st January 2024

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS – KING’S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK BOROUGH CHARITY AND EAST OF OUSE, POLVER AND THE NAR INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD

Purpose of Report

Councillor Joyce has resigned as the Councils representative on King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Charity and East of Ouse, Polver and the Nar Internal Drainage Board and this report asks Council to appoint a replacement Member to those positions.

Recommendation

That Council appoint a Member to serve on King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Charity and East of Ouse, Polver and the Nar Internal Drainage Board.

Reason for decision

To ensure continued involvement in the community by the Council.

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 The Council at its meeting on 13th July 2023 confirmed a number of appointments to outside bodies and partnerships.

2.0 INSURANCE COVER FOR BOROUGH COUNCILLORS

2.1 The Council’s insurance will indemnify any employee or member arising from their service on the board or participation in the capacity of governor, officer, trustee, director, committee member or other official of any not-for profit entity other than the insured.

Provided always that:

- a) The service or participation by the employee or member is specifically requested by or under the specific direction of the insured.
 - b) The insured is legally entitled to approve the service or participation and to indemnify the employee of member in respect of it.
 - c) Any payment will only be made by the insurer for an amount in excess of any indemnification or insurance coverage provided by the not-for-profit entity or afforded from any other source and to which the employee or member is entitled.
- 2.2 When a member is appointed to serve on an outside body, they should also ensure that as well as completing the Register of Financial and Other Interest form, they should complete the annual “Related Party Transactions form”, with the details of those bodies on which they serve.

3.0 FEEDBACK FROM MEMBERS ON OUTSIDE BODIES

- 3.1 Arrangements for reporting back by Members serving on Outside Bodies are approved every year at Council as follows:
- 3.2 The Panels should be able to request reports from Councillors serving on outside bodies which fall within their remit. By programming the reports over the Panel’s annual timetable of meetings, it would be possible for members both to assess the usefulness of making appointments to bodies and be informed of any relevant matters.
- 3.3 Cabinet Members serving on outside bodies will report via their Cabinet Members’ reports to Council.
- 3.4 It is not intended that reports would be required from Councillors serving on bodies local to their wards. All would be encouraged, however to use the Members’ Bulletin to report on the work of any such organisation.

4.0 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES

Following the resignation of Councillor Joyce to the below, Council are requested to make the following appointments (other Member appointments are listed below for information):

King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Charity – Current representative is Councillor Bubb.

East of Ouse, Polver and the Nar Internal Drainage Board – Current representatives are Councillors Barclay, Bearshaw, Crofts, Devulapalli, Dickinson, Kirk, Long, Moriarty, Rose and non-councillors M Little and D Harrison.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Mileage and subsistence allowances for Councillors attending meetings.

6.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Current lists of member representation
ACSeS report on liabilities of Outside Bodies

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL ON 31 JANUARY 2024 FROM
CABINET ON 5 DECEMBER 2023**

CAB74: COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT - FINAL SCHEME FOR 2024-2025

Cabinet considered a report which reminded Members that the Council operated a scheme to help working age people on low incomes with the cost of their council tax by reducing their council tax bill, known as the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme. The report explained that there were national regulations for a CTS Scheme for customers who had reached pension age, but the council was free to decide the rules for its own CTS schemes for working age people in our area, taking into account certain government requirements. The report only refers to our CTS Scheme for working age people.

The council's CTS Scheme was reviewed annually and could only be amended from the start of a financial year. This report followed on from the Cabinet report of 1 August 2023 outlining the options for a draft CTS Scheme to go to public consultation and selecting Option 1 as the preferred scheme to consult on. The public consultation ran from 21 August 2023 to 1 October 2023 and the results were summarised at section 3 and Appendix C of the report.

Cabinet was asked to note the consultation process, the widening of the criteria in the current economic climate to match the support given to protected groups and approve Option 1 being the recommendation for the final CTS scheme for working age people for 2024/2025. The recommendation would need to be agreed by full Council by 31 January 2024 to be ready for implementation on 1 April 2024.

The report advised that a CTS Scheme formed part of the Taxbase calculation. The Taxbase must be set by 31 January 2024 so the CTS Scheme must be decided at the Council meeting of 31 January 2024.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Blunt commented that he believed the consultation was meaningless.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Dickinson asked if the consultation carried out had been compared with that by other authorities.

Councillor Moriarty commented the consultation was not worthless, but work was to be done on improving the response rate.

Councillor Parish acknowledged that work was being done on improving consultation relative to others. It was noted that the Corporate Performance Panel had supported the recommendations.

RESOLVED: That the consultation process, the widening of the criteria in the current economic climate to match the support given to protected groups be noted.

RECOMMENDED: That Option 1 being the recommendation for the final CTS scheme for working age people for 2024/2025.

(Option 1: Make the CTS Scheme more generous by using the Protected Scheme rules as the rules for the Local Scheme)

2) That it be noted that if full Council does not agree the CTS Scheme detailed in Option 1, the current CTS Scheme will continue in default.

Reason for Decision

To ensure a CTS scheme for working age people for 2024/2025 is agreed by full Council by the deadline of 31 January 2024.

**RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL ON 31 JANUARY 2024
FROM CABINET ON 15 JANUARY 2024**

CAB88 POLLING DISTRICT REVIEW

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

Cabinet received a report which set out the Council's duty to undertake a review of the polling districts and polling places in respect of Parliamentary electoral areas that fell within the boundaries of the Borough. The review must take place every five years. It was noted that it was the (ARO) Acting Returning Officer's responsibility to keep polling stations under review.

The previous Review took place in October/November 2018.

Views had been sought from all stakeholders including County Councillors, Borough Councillors, and political groups. In addition, Parish Councils had been consulted together with local disability groups.

Representations closed on 24 November 2023 and were published accordingly (on the BCKLWN website). The ARO had made further comments to the representations received.

The following table shows the proposed amendments to the Schedule

Polling District (area)	Proposed change
PD2 (Fairstead)	To be re-integrated into the wider PD1 (Fairstead) polling district.
PJ4 (St Margaret's with St Nicholas)	To be re-integrated into the wider PJ1 (St Margaret's with St Nicholas) polling district
WT7 (Denver)	To be re-integrated into the wider WM1 (Denver) polling district

It was noted that the Corporate Performance Panel had supported the recommendations in the report.

RECOMMENDED: That the Appendix attached to the report on the Polling District and Polling Place Review Schedule be adopted.

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations. (A Polling District Review has to be carried out once every five years).

CAB89 COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS FOR LONG-TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES AND SECOND HOMES

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Revenues and Benefits Manager presented a report which explained that Section 79 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 allowed billing authorities to apply the existing 100% premium for long term empty properties after a property had been empty for one year

rather than the current time of two years. This change could be made from 1 April 2024. More details were set out in section 2 of the report.

The report also explained that Section 80 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 allowed billing authorities to charge an additional premium of 100% on a property which was substantially furnished and where there was no resident (i.e., second homes, referred to in the Act as 'dwellings occupied periodically'). The Act set out that the Council must give at least 12 months' notice of this change so charges in relation to this part of the legislation could be implemented from 1 April 2025.

Under sanding order 34 Councillor Dark drew attention to what was said at the Corporate Performance Panel in that it was an opportunity to raise funds for authorities at all levels, however he cautioned any comments made as reported on by the EDP regarding second home owners. He commented that the paper gave the opportunity to look at the options available.

Councillor Beales confirmed he felt it was right to give it some thought, and reservations were not surprising as some second home owners may decide not to remain as such, properties may come on the market for use as full time homes. He commented that it was right to make the most of the council tax for the residents of the borough.

Councillor Morley responded that it would be dealt with sensitively, but the additional money would be of benefit for the services in the area.

Councillor Rust drew attention to the areas where residents were not able to access services such as childcare and schools because the number of families in areas of high second home ownership didn't sustain them.

Councillor Squire asked what procedures were in place to check on those that would then claim it was their permanent home. It was noted that checks were carried out to ascertain such things as GPs, Dentists, schools etc.

Councillor Moriarty commented that often the second home owners didn't have large incomes, and did contribute to their local communities, he also drew attention to the fact that property prices were often out of the range of first time buyers.

Councillor Ring commented on the alleged damage to the visitor economy, and drew attention to any increase would be in the region of 1 weeks rent on the property when rented out. He commented that those who chose not to rent out their properties were generally those who could afford not to do so.

Councillor Parish drew attention to the press comments and confirmed the scheme was a "no brainer" for the area as it was essential to find additional income wherever possible. He reminded Members that the majority of the additional funding would go to the County Council and the Police.

RECOMMENDED: That Council:

- 1) Charge the long-term empty property premium after 12 months from 1 April 2024,
- 2) Charge a 100% premium for second homes falling into Class B from 1 April 2025,
- 3) Adopt the Council Tax Discounts Resolution as at Section 7 of Appendix C,
- 4) Work with other Norfolk authorities and Norfolk County Council to ensure the maximum possible amount of the additional second homes income is returned to those boroughs most affected by second home ownership and,

- 5) Delegate authority to the Revenues and Benefits Manager, in consultation with the s151 Officer and Council Leader, to agree the technical guidelines for any exceptions to the premiums imposed by central government.

Reason for Decision

To decide whether the provisions within sections 79 and 80 of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 regarding additional premiums should be implemented.

CAB90 WHISTLE BLOWING POLICY

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

The Deputy Monitoring Officer presented a report which reminded Members that the Council maintained a Whistleblowing Policy which set out the protections given to staff, Members and relevant third parties where they reported wrongdoing to the Council.

The Policy was drafted in 2017. It had now been reviewed and revised, taking into account matters raised by the Audit team. Key revisions included clarifications in a number of areas, a more robust structure for the assessment of whistleblowing reports, and a monitoring programme.

The Policy was also now supplemented by a Procedure, which addressed (i) how whistleblowing reports should be made, escalated and assessed, and (ii) the protections (in terms of employment rights) that whistleblowers would receive.

The revised Policy required the approval of Full Council to be adopted.

Councillor Rust asked if there was a Freedom to Speak Up Officer. It was confirmed that there was not, but it was something that could be explored around the training process.

Councillor Beales commended the clear plain English document.

RECOMMENDED: That the revised Whistleblowing Policy be approved and adopted

Reason for Decision

To ensure that the Policy is kept up-to-date and takes account of Audit recommendations.

CAB91 DESIGNATION OF A VILLAGE GREEN - SOUTH LYNN

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

Councillor de Whalley presented the report which brought forward a proposal for designation of a Village Green on land to the west of Hardings Way, South Lynn on land owned by the Borough Council.

The report also detailed proposals for the establishment of a community orchard which would form part of the Village Green and the Beuys's project on land to the north of the proposed Village Green.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Kemp addressed Cabinet in support of the proposal and urged the inclusion of the additional areas of land which were not currently included because

they were allocated within the Local Plan as sites proposed for residential development. It was confirmed that it was not lawful to include those sites.

Councillor Beales confirmed he was happy with the footprint contained within the report.

Councillor Squires encouraged the purchase of trees for the site which were certified as healthy, to which it was confirmed she would be consulted when it came to it.

Councillor Rust commended Councillor Kemp for her support for the community and for suggesting the community orchard. She commented that it was hoped that community led housing on the site may be provided on the site.

In summing up Councillor Parish commented after the community waiting a long time for this, it was finally getting approved.

The Environment and Community Panel supported the recommendations in the report.

RECOMMENDED:

That the land identified in the plan attached with the report (the red shaded area to the west of Hardings Way) be designated as a Village Green.

Reason for Decision

To progress projects which enhance the environment and protect and increase green space for the benefit of the local community.

CAB93 **APPOINTMENT OF HONORARY ALDERMEN**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

Cabinet was informed that following the 2023 Borough Council Elections, the opportunity had been taken to review the appointments of new Honorary Aldermen. Consideration has been given to nominations by Group Leaders and it had been agreed to bring forward five individuals at this stage to enable time to review the criteria for nominations.

Councillor Parish reported that following further discussions it had been agreed to bring forward those nominations in tranches up to the next elections, he also proposed to include the fact that the review of criteria for nominations to Honorary Aldermen be undertaken for new nominations.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Dark commented that the backlog of proposed Aldermen was due to Covid and no fault of the individuals, and the reviewed criteria for new nominations should be in place prior to the elections in 2027.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the Council places on record its deep appreciation of the eminent services to the Council rendered by former Councillors:

Kathleen Collins (previously Mellish)
David Collis
Michael Peake
Geoffrey Hipperson
Andrew Tyler

2) That a Special Meeting of the Council to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on those former Councillors be held after Mayormaking on Thursday, 16 May 2024 and the engrossment of recommendation above and an Aldermanic badge be presented to the Honorary Aldermen at that Council meeting.

3) That a further report be brought forward reviewing the criteria of nominating Honorary Aldermen before any further new nominations are considered by the Council.

CAB96 **COUNCIL COMPANIES FUNDING**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on You Tube](#)

Assistant Director David Ousby presented a report which brought together the advice the council had received from legal, financial and tax advisors on the funding of the council housing companies. It set out:

1. The total amount of borrowing available that the council could provide to support the housing companies, and the details of the funding agreements between the council and the companies.
2. the financing arrangements for West Norfolk Housing Company Limited (WNHC), which expired in March 2023, to allow that company to continue to purchase properties, both from the councils Major Housing Programme (MHP) and elsewhere.
3. the options available to the council to allow West Norfolk Property Limited (WNPL) to manage the private rented (PRS) properties in its portfolio, and the future pipeline of properties being delivered through the councils Major Housing Programme (MHP), through a hybrid debt plus equity financing and lease extension provision

The report and its recommendations had been reviewed by external consultants Grant Thornton. Their findings had been incorporated in the report to Cabinet.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Kemp asked if the council was safeguarding its loans against Council's companies as there were only a small number registered against West Norfolk Housing and none against West Norfolk Property. The Monitoring Officer confirmed they were aware of the issue with the charges where there were some errors in the documents meaning the amendments had to go through the courts for amendments.

Councillor Beales acknowledged there was a lot of work to be done with the Companies which was all part of the proposals.

Councillor Parish acknowledged there were now sufficient staff in the Legal Department to help with the work.

Under standing order 34 Councillor Dark drew attention to the suggestion made at the Corporate Performance Panel that the Shareholder Committee be involved in agreeing the final terms of the Drawdown facility with the companies.

Cabinet agreed to the amendment. Cabinet discussed the issue of whether it needed to progress to an exempt session to further consider the exempt appendices, it was agreed that members were very familiar with the appendices so would not need to exclude the press and public, and the detail of them would be further considered in detail by the Shareholder Committee.

RECOMMENDED: 4) That delegated authority be granted to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business to amend the Capital Strategy for 2023-2024 to reflect the approved Drawdown facility to the Companies.

Reason for Decision

1. To deliver on Council Corporate Objectives:
 - Promote growth and prosperity to benefit West Norfolk;
 - Protect our environment;
 - Efficient and effective delivery of our services; and,
 - Support our communities.

To deliver affordable and private rented housing for acquisition by the council's wholly owned housing companies to support the delivery of council corporate objectives

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**31st January 2024****COUNCILLOR BEALES - CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS**For the period 24th November 2023 to 31st January 2024**1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.****Nar Ouse Regeneration Area.**

Councillors may be aware that it was necessary for an emergency item to be taken to Cabinet in November last year regarding this project. Although there are known areas of contamination on this brownfield development site and an agreed Contaminated Land Method Statement, discussions with the relevant regulatory body, the Environment Agency, concluded that there was now a requirement to remove the contaminated material from site and for this spoil to be deposited at an appropriate waste site. This remediation exercise has now been concluded and was budgeted for within the Capital Programme.

Major Housing Project**Florence Fields (Gaywood, near King's Lynn Academy)**

The ongoing difficult weather, either persistent rain and/or high winds continues to cause logistical problems. The 3 – 4 inches of rainfall from Storm Babet that fell within 24 hours or so and ongoing rainfall since, deposited large amounts of water on the site that Lovell, our contractor, have managed by constructing temporary reservoirs. This has attracted comment about the amount of water on the site, but it is actually a positive move as it allows work to continue and manages the amount of water flowing into the drains and ditches. A Council owned culvert running under the cycle path (to the southwest of the site) has been repaired. The Network Rail repair to their culvert under the adjacent railway line is still awaited but work is anticipated to start this month. This delay has not impacted the project with works being rephased to accommodate. The original contract included an allowance for surface water management, which has covered the additional costs incurred to date.

There have been two minor complaints since I last updated Council. These are both from the same neighbour and investigation and follow up leads the team to believe that these complaints stem from a wider frustration with the scheme rather than specific issues.

Complaints are taken very seriously and in order to keep neighbours informed of works on site, newsletters were issued to over a thousand homes, and the parents of pupils at the three adjacent schools at the start of the school term.

Two existing gas mains, known to have crossed the site historically but precise location uncertain, were found in recent excavations. They had previously been declared defunct by Cadent (the regional gas distribution company) but in line with the precautionary approach taken by the Borough and Lovell our contractor and build partner, they were re-inspected by Cadent at our request. There was some concern when Cadent declared the pipes to be live after all, but further significant investigations have confirmed beyond doubt that the pipes are dead. They will be removed and Cadent will discharge their easements over the site. Again, operations have needed to be re-phased, but this doesn't look to have delayed the overall project.

Members will be aware that the Borough has invested in flood mitigation measures on all the homes in this development. One of those measures, relating to insulation, has recently become more difficult to implement due to changes in our warranty providers requirements. The Borough Council and Lovell have worked together to find a new solution that both increases the properties resilience whilst being easier to construct. There will also be a cost saving to build cost. A good example of how the need to protect our climate and environment can lead to innovative and cost effective solutions.

Piling the first phase of properties was completed without issues and bricklaying will soon start, somewhat ahead of schedule. Overall, we remain on programme, but should poor weather continue, and/or Network Rail works are delayed, the programme may yet slip.

Salters Road (King's Lynn close to Lynnsport)

This site continues to progress well. The handover of the first properties has been pushed back from early January to the end of the month to allow fitting of carpets and other flooring. This is a late addition to the contract, but Freebridge are to be applauded for the decision which will be financed by them and bring a greatly improved quality of life to future residents. The extra couple of weeks has also allowed the Lovell team to attend to the usual snagging issues and will ensure that the properties handed over meet the high expectations of both the Borough and Lovells.

The next phase of handovers is due for early March. Properties in the final phases are progressing well and are currently ahead of schedule for handover.

A creating communities event is planned for the 3rd of February to help integrate those moving into the area over the next year with the existing community. I am looking into this being the subject of a short pre Council

briefing.

Members visited the site on 19th of January in cold but sunny weather and seemed pleased with both progress on site and quality of the homes. Thanks to our officers, and the Lovells and Freebridge teams for making this possible.

Southend Road (Hunstanton)

Weather delays at Southend Road continue. The wind is hampering efforts to install the final roof trusses and the cold weather is limiting when bricks can be laid. To help combat delay, windows and screeding have been brought forward to create semi watertight units despite the roof not being completed. This has allowed internal trades to commence with partition walls going up and electrical and plumbing work underway. On areas where all the roof trusses are all installed, tiling and zinc work has started.

Completion is forecast for June of this year and the first 7 properties went on sale on Boxing Day. There have been twelve serious sales enquiries and William H Brown are working through them to ensure that locality requirements are met. The corporate projects team receives a weekly update from the William H Brown team and meet with them monthly.

Protocol for press enquiries

Media enquiries are by their nature, often at very short notice and a protocol is being developed to help guide the media, officers, members and Lovell on how to deal with short notice interviews. This will balance the Council's need to communicate with the media with the importance of site security and safety. Among other things, it will be important that the protocol identifies who needs to be aware of any interview, what topics can be discussed (some will be commercially sensitive) and agreeing specific "safe locations" on and off site where interviews can safely be undertaken.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Funding of council housing companies – should Council approve the recommendation from Cabinet of 15th January 2024. Should that approval be forthcoming, the Shareholder Committee will consider the technical aspects and possible timing of any funding offer in detail. Those Members that are interested are urged to attend.

Cabinet report on Lynnsport 1 development (to be considered by Cabinet on 6th February 2024).

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

24th November – Town Deal Board
27th November – Teams meeting re The Place
28th November – visit to The Epicentre (Haverhill)
28th November – MMPB planning meeting.
28th November – R&D Panel
29th November – Teams meeting re MMPB
29th November – Planning Committee training
1st December – meeting with James Wild MP
1st December – Town Deal Board comms meeting
4th December – Mayors Business Awards shortlist meeting
4th December – Teams meeting of Riverfront/Rail To River Project Board
5th December – planning induction training
5th December – meeting with Exec Director for Place re Grant Thornton report
5th December – Cabinet
6th December – Cabinet briefing
7th December – Budget briefing to Cabinet
13th December – MMPB (Members Major Project Board)
13th December – update re Active Travel Hubs
13th December – portfolio meeting
14th December – meeting with Cllr. Ware re Housing Companies
18th December – portfolio meeting (finance)
19th December – Teams meeting re Riverfront (TDB)
20th December – meeting with Leader of the Council
20th December – Cabinet briefing
3rd January – E&C Panel (apologies given)
4th January – CPP
5th January – Cabinet informal
8th January - Teams meeting of Riverfront/Rail To River Project Board
8th January – Teams meeting re projects on MMPB list
8th January – Cabinet briefing
10th January – Cabinet briefing
10th January – R&D Panel
14th January – Teams meeting re Riverfront (TDB)
14th January – Cabinet sifting
14th January – Cabinet
16th January – Teams training on Shareholding Committee & Council companies
17th January – Mayors Business Awards judging visits
17th January – Cabinet sifting (finance and budget)
18th January – update from TDB Chair on Teams
19th January – Member tour of Salters Road
22nd January – Cabinet sifting (finance and budget)
22nd January – meeting with CEO/Cllr Ware re Housing Companies
22nd January – West Norfolk Economic Strategy
22nd January Council companies training
24th January – Cabinet briefing

25th January – Teams portfolio meeting
26th January – TDB at COWA
26th January – tour of School of Nursing at COWA
29th January – visit to Hethel and Scottow innovation centres
30th January – R&D Panel
31st January – full Council

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

31 January 2024

COUNCILLOR SANDRA SQUIRE - CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & COASTAL

For the period 23 November 2023 to January 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Waste & Recycling:

I am delighted to say that we have successfully completed another year of Christmas catch up collections. Whilst many of us enjoy additional time at home over the Christmas and New Year period the teams who collect our waste and recycling do not and also work Saturdays to catch up. I sent my regards to the team at the Serco west Norfolk depot just before Christmas and I would like to put on record my thanks to them.

Also I would like to thank our residents for using the information we give on radio, print and social media to manage their waste well. Over the Christmas period our Facebook posts were seen over 1/3 million times and by 20,000 readers of the local paper.

In three weeks ¼ million bins were emptied. The work of the teams in waste and communications should be acknowledged by the council. By working together, we keep the Christmas waste collections running smoothly.

In the follow up to Christmas the Waste and Recycling Manager spoke to BBC Radio Norfolk on behalf of both his and the Public Open Space teams to talk about Christmas tree disposal, promoting both the councils own shredding service, brown bins but also responsible waste disposal.

The Waste and Recycling Manager is now leading the Norfolk Waste Partnership on the issues around fly tipping and I expect to be able to report on progress around this subject in the coming months.

Flooding:

The flood and water management team have been engaging in a lot of multi-agency work with regard to inland flooding following Storm Henk. This has been in-particular regard to the Grimston / Roydon area and also with work around the North & South Creake and Burnham Market.

It is worth noting that while we are actively engaging in the works for both those locations we are not the lead agency in the works ongoing (instead this is Lead Local Flood Authority and Anglian Water), nor do we have any ownership of assets in those areas (e.g. we are not responsible for any of the ditches / drains). My thanks go to the team for all their work trying to help our residents.

Accompanying this report is Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance Booklet regarding watercourses and some flood prevention tips, and the EA Flood Information postcard. Please share with your residents as they contain useful information and contact numbers in case they are needed.

Further information on Living next to a watercourse is available here: [Living next to a watercourse in Norfolk - riparian owners - Norfolk County Council](#)

Information on how to report a flood can be found here: [Report a flood - Norfolk County Council](#)

The flooding hotline number to report a flood anywhere in Norfolk is **0344 800 8013**. If there is an immediate danger to life, call 999.

Further information on flooding and how to sign up for flood alerts is available on the Borough council website: [Flood protection and flood warning | Flood protection and flood warning | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

Water Quality & Shellfish Testing:

The Heacham & Hunstanton Cockles (Stubborn Sand) cockle bed which has had a Temporary Downgrade of its classification since poor results in the summer, has now had two consecutive results at levels which allow the temporary downgrade of a category C to be removed, with the bed to go back to the Time Limited classification which is currently a B.

This classification will allow the harvesting of cockles for purification and heat treatment until August when the Time Limited prohibition will commence.

I visited the Eastern IFCA offices before Christmas to learn more about our cockle beds and the issues they're facing including water quality and will be going out on one of their testing trips next month to learn more.

The new bathing water classifications were published in December. The classifications are based on data from 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023. While there has been a drop in standards nationally, our classifications remained the same. I continue to work with the LGA Coastal SIG and other councils to look at results and how improvements can be made.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Communications and providing encouragement for the public to do the right thing with their waste is a theme that will be taken forward over the next few months. The corporate plan demonstrates our commitment to protect the environment including increasing use of food caddies and the quality and quantity of items collected for recycling in the green bin.

We will be running a programme of events to encourage the use of food caddies to recycle food waste as it will reduce the amount of residual waste and is far better for the environment for food waste to go to the anaerobic digester. If any councillor needs a replacement food caddy, please let us know and we'll make sure you have a new one so we can all lead by example.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Joint Waste Contract Review Board
Joint Marine/Coast Partnerships Core Management Group
Cabinet (Dec)
LGA Coastal SIG
Eastern IFCA visit
Various Cabinet Briefings
Various Portfolio Briefings
Visit to the Depot
Visit to Hunstanton RNLI Station
LGA Coastal SIG water quality meetings
Environment & Community Panel
Meeting with Friends of Horsey Seals & James Wild MP
Cabinet Sifting
Cabinet (Jan)
Visit to RSPCA East Winch
North West Norfolk CaBa
Wash & North Coast Forum

Important Numbers and Contacts

Floodline – to sign up for flood warnings, find latest information or report flooding

Telephone: 0345 988 1188 / Textphone: 0345 602 6340

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Incident Hotline – to report blockages or areas of concern and flooding

0800 80 70 60 - Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Check any current warnings and latest river, sea groundwater and rainfall levels: <https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk>

Consider Flood Products to reduce the impact of flooding:

www.bluepages.org.uk

FLOOD

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

Floodline 0345 988 1188

Incident Hotline 0800 80 70 60



Environment
Agency

Watercourses

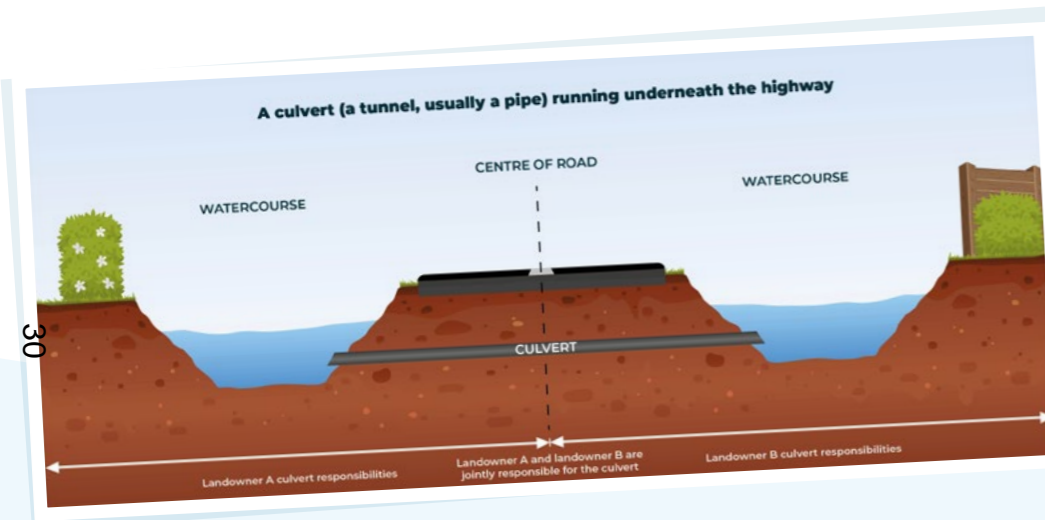
Who is responsible?

Culvert watercourses

Many culverts and pipes that run under roads, paths and highways are privately owned. The landowners on either side are jointly responsible for maintenance.

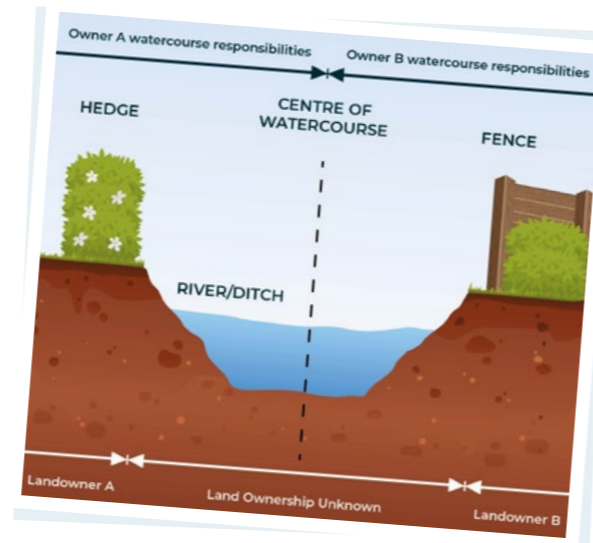
Even if there is a fence, hedge or wall between your land and the culvert you are still responsible for keeping the watercourse clear.

Norfolk County Council has a register of culverts and who owns them. Sometimes responsibility can lie with more than two landowners when a culvert runs behind several houses for example.



Watercourses on unregistered land

Landowners next to unregistered land are responsible for maintenance up to the centre line of the watercourse.



Watercourse between properties

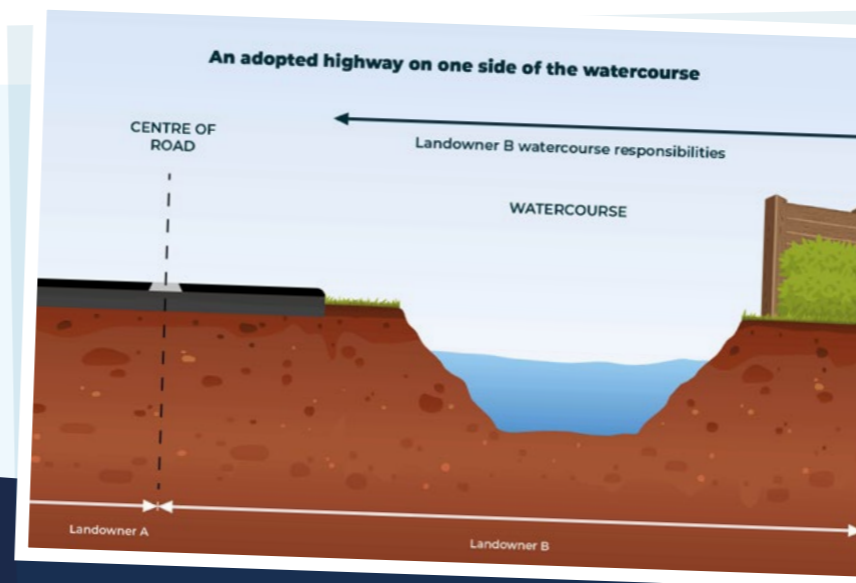
If there is a different landowner or tenant on each side of a watercourse, each person is responsible for their side up to the centre of the watercourse.

Even if there is a fence, hedge or wall between your garden and the watercourse, you are still responsible for keeping the watercourse clear, unless any title deeds state otherwise.

Adopted highway on one side of the watercourse

An adopted highway is a road maintained by Highways England or the council. The landowner on the watercourse side has maintenance responsibilities for the whole watercourse.

Even if there is a fence, hedge or wall between your land and the watercourse you are still responsible for keeping the watercourse clear, even if the title deeds do not show the watercourse.



Watercourse owners have rights as well as responsibilities.

These include receiving unpolluted water, protecting your property from flooding, fishing (with a licence), and the removal of a small amount of water from a watercourse for domestic use (also requires a licence). You can find out more online at www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse

WATERCOURSE CHECKLIST



- ✓ Carry out regular inspections and keep the watercourse clear of any debris, for example, litter, grass cuttings, branches, vegetation and animal carcasses.
- ✓ Maintain the bed and banks of the watercourse, including cutting back trees and shrubs.
- ✓ Allow water to flow without obstruction, pollution or diversion. Ask yourself: could a fish swim through the watercourse?
- ✓ Remove invasive plant species
- ✓ Keep any structures, such as grills, clear at all times
- ✓ Ensure you apply for consent or a permit for any construction or alterations that could affect the flow of water
- ✓ Carry out repairs or remedial works as directed
- ✓ Follow any byelaws (a law made by the local council)

CHECK YOUR WATERCOURSE REGULARLY

It's important to carry out regular inspections of your watercourse, particularly if you are responsible for a culvert, if you know your watercourse is prone to littering or fly-tipping, or if other obstructions such as garden waste are regularly dumped in it. Report fly-tipping online www.gov.uk/report-flytipping

BE PREPARED

www.norfolk.gov.uk/flooding

To report a flood

CALL

0344 800 8013

If you are in immediate danger call **999**

31

REMEMBER



- ✓ Always put safety first when clearing watercourses.
- ✓ Clear your watercourse when the weather is fine and dry
- ✓ Avoid clearing in nesting season (February to the middle of August)
- ✓ Never enter floodwater to try to clear a blocked watercourse.
- ✓ Sign up to receive flood alerts
www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings

Fight flooding & keep water flowing in Norfolk

NSFA
Norfolk Strategic
Flooding Alliance

The best protection against flooding is to prevent flooding where possible.

- Keep your guttering, downpipes and drains clear of leaves and mud.
- Report blocked or broken highway drains near your property online.
- Check for blocked watercourses near your property. Look for watercourses behind hedges, fences and walls at the edge of your garden.



NSFA
Norfolk Strategic
Flooding Alliance

 Norfolk County Council

The Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance is a taskforce that works together to ensure local communities and infrastructure are safer and more resilient to the risks of inland and coastal flooding. The Alliance includes representatives from the Environment Agency, Anglian Water, the Association of Drainage Authorities, the Water Management Alliance, Water Resources East, the Norfolk Resilience Forum, the Broads Authority and Norfolk's county, borough, city, district and parish councils.

 **Norfolk**
County Council

Call 0344 800 8013 to report flooding

Call **999** if you are in immediate danger

www.norfolk.gov.uk/flooding

What is a watercourse?

Watercourses move water from one place to another. They can be natural or artificial, and might be completely dry for long periods of time, sometimes years.

Different types of watercourses include:



Streams



Rivers



Pipes or culverts*



Dikes and ditches

Have you got a watercourse near your house or business?

Do you know who is responsible for keeping it clear?

- ✓ If you live on, lease, or own land next to a watercourse, you are responsible for maintaining the watercourse, regardless of the boundary indications on any property deeds.
- ✓ If you are a tenant or landlord, check your tenancy agreement to confirm who is responsible for the maintenance of a watercourse.
- ✓ The different rights, responsibilities and common laws involved with watercourses are called Riparian Rights, read more online: www.norfolk.gov.uk/watercourses

Call 0344 800 8013 to report flooding

Call 999 if you are in immediate danger

*a tunnel, usually a pipe, that carries water under a road, bridge, path, or between ditches for example.

Read our handy guide to watercourse responsibilities inside!



CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

31 January 2024

COUNCILLOR CHRIS MORLEY - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

For the period 23 November to 18th January 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

The main drivers of the Finance team over the last period have been:

Completing the audit work on the much delayed Statement of Accounts for 2019/20 financial year;

Continuing a more granular review of Earmarked Reserves;

Cost management discussions with Assistant Directors against, for this administrative transition year, a 5% cost reduction target; and continuing the budget and forward financial planning process which will culminate in the Financial Plan 2023 -2028 report, due to be presented to Council next month.

The Government has publicly stated that they are offering a Settlement of +6.5% for next year but local Districts are only receiving an average of +4.9% and our total revenue support is slightly less than expected by the tune of £0.5m.

Unfortunately, our Revenue Account, and this is the Account by which our ability to be a “going concern” is assessed, has now been reduced to the point (and contrary to opinions made in the public domain) where we need a significant funding boost. Without this we cannot meaningfully cut our services and financial outgoings to recover to a reasonably sound financial platform.

As we stand today, we are having to use £4.48m of our Reserves to balance our finances for the forthcoming year 2024/25 and £3.8m for 2025/26, However, this is not sufficient to cover the gap in 2025/6 with a £2.3m gap still remaining over and above our minimum reserve level balance which we wish to maintain. Therefore, without something changing our financial “black hole” will engulf us earlier than expected. These figures may change as final adjustments are made in the lead up to the full Council on 22nd February.

We will be recommending to Council that we increase Council Tax by the most allowable figure and as I write, our returns from Business Rates appear to be holding up. We will also have to increase our fees and charges this year, having mostly been held constant for the last period. The average increase will be around 10% for discretionary services but there are significant variations proposed such as +5.6% for trade waste, but car parking by an average of 11.9%. Notwithstanding these increases our headline budget figures are still, for 2024/5:

Total Net Cost	£27.07m	
Income	£12.25m	Business Rates
	£7.97m	Council Tax
	£2.37m	Government Support (various)
Total Income	£22.59m	
To balance	£4.48m	Withdraw from Reserves.

So, what has been going “wrong”?

- At least 15% real terms squeeze on support from Government since 2015;
- Recent tax increases from an unnecessarily low base;
- Significant deprivation and homelessness costs;
- Monies needing to be saved for flood and coastal erosion;
- We continue with our Climate Change Strategy;
- AND 43% of our Council Tax goes towards funding Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs). This is a levy placed on us and comes out of our Council Tax receipts – it is not a separate charge that we merely pass on to our tax payers and collect the sums, as apparently, some IDB Board Members think.

IDBs

The residents of West Norfolk are not alone in seeing their hard earned money going, disproportionately, to fund the work of these Boards. 23 District Councils (and these are all, like West Norfolk, relatively small Boroughs in terms of Finance, but carry serious responsibilities) have joined to form a Special Interest Group (SIG) to lobby for IDB costs to be funded centrally.

IDBs do important and critical work, a significant proportion (around ½) of this country is affected by water levels in river basins, and as we see, now on a regular basis, significant flooding around the country. Residents in places such as West Norfolk, cannot be expected to bear the brunt of local IDB costs and the Government should step in.

The lobby for this is growing, the SIG has made its case to the PM and senior MPs of all Parties. The Leader of this Council has written at length to both of our MPs and Liz Truss is taking a lead for us by co-hosting a meeting in the Houses of Parliament early next month. The subject is gathering much traction (election year?), so much so that, despite being one of the founder members, there is only 1 place for us at the meeting. Our S151 Officer will be representing us and most ably.

SPECIAL EXPENSES

Quite rightly, these costs are under more scrutiny than hitherto and are expenses incurred by this Council in performing, on its land around the Borough, activities (such as grass cutting) which would normally be undertaken by a Town or Parish Council. These costs are ascribed to each Parish or Town and paid for through the Council Tax demand.

We intend to put in place more information on the make up of these costs and in the unparished areas of Kings Lynn, provide more local powers to direct the work as seen fit locally.

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SYSTEM (CTSS)

This Administration recognises the increasing issues with the cost of living, even as it affects families who have 1 or in some cases 2, working members. We are therefore recommending the continuation of CTSS benefits but not only widening the eligibility but increasing the benefit, for those eligible, to 100%.

LEVELLING UP & REGENERATION ACT 2013

This Act was put into Law last October and it permits the following changes to Council Tax which we are recommending be put into place by this Council.

Changes to the existing premium for long term empty properties.

There is already a premium for those properties that have been

empty, with no valid reason, for 2 years and more, this currently starts at an extra 100% and rises to 300% after 10 years.

Nobody likes to see empty houses blighting the area and we can now start charging double tax from 1 year of being empty. We can start charging such properties from April this year and we are recommending to Council that we do just that.

A 100% (DOUBLE) Premium for 2nd Homes.

The Act permits Councils to charge double Council Tax for 2nd homes from April 2025. We are recommending Council agree to this.

This is not just a money making exercise on the back of second home owners who we know contribute to local prosperity and very often, their communities. However, we do want to see vibrant communities all year round and hope this action will encourage this, but if people wish to sell their properties, the extra housing stock that becomes available will help to add to more full time occupation. Also, more opportunities for local people to stay in the area.

There will be exceptions, eg where there is a seasonal occupancy restriction and a full list of those categories of domestic properties who are excluded under the Act, if we go ahead, will form part of a communication programme later this year.

The financial impact of these changes will be addressed in the Recommendations to Council but the impact on our revenues will have to be negotiated with both the County and the Police Authority.

EXTERNAL AUDIT OF OUR ACCOUNTS

At last we are coming to a conclusion on the financial year 2019/20.

We now have an unqualified opinion on our Statement of Accounts from the External Auditors, EY, and by the time this report is taken by Council we will have the results of the January Audit Committee meeting.

Having said this, we are still uncertain of the final cost that EY will claim. Furthermore, the fast track audit operation for 20/21 and 21/22, which the National Audit Office wanted to be completed by 31/3/24, now seems out of reach and we wait for further advice on

how the audits of these years are to be conducted (country wide); together, of course, with the associated costs.

CAPITAL ACCOUNT

There is headroom for capital expenditure even though we have a tremendous and exciting programme, totalling some £150m over the next 4 years.

However, climate change, inflation, the geo-political issues that currently exist (and appear to be getting worse) and consequent interest rates are not helping deliver the plans we have for improvements to Town and communities, as we would wish.

The plans we have for delivering more rental and social houses through our subsidiary companies are not on hold but are under significant scrutiny. Interest rates are a significant factor in the finance and ownership analysis. We cannot afford to make a false move, notwithstanding our aspirations to improve, significantly, the opportunities for the businesses, people of and visitors to, West Norfolk.

I am sure more detail on this will be included in other Portfolio reports.

However, the underlying position I report further above, on our revenue account, and which is the yardstick for Government to measure our ability to be a going concern, is still the backcloth against which we are allowed to perform our investment strategies.

SLAs and GRANTS

Excluding the significant Household Support Fund (£325K) and money we may allocate for the Night Shelter, we still have aspirations to support communities through grants totalling some £400K.

We are scrutinising the merits of each against our Corporate Plan and the relative likely outcomes, also bringing our SLAs up to date, where many have remained dormant for some time.

PROCUREMENT

We are still weighing up the detail of the new Act and a Presentation is scheduled for Council later this year. Fuller report in future.

The Procurement Act is due to come into force in October 2024, with a six-month implementation period during which officers will be able to attend training. Secondary legislation is currently due to be published in the early part of this year.

The Government has provided some short videos which set out some of the basic intentions of the Act, and the key changes. These can be viewed at: [The Official Transforming Public Procurement Knowledge Drops - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/the-official-transforming-public-procurement-knowledge-drops).

WINS LOTTERY

Our promotion was a limited success. The volume of Sales has crept up to around 800 from 700 per month and the scheme is useful for those local causes, which may not have a national presence but may be struggling either for start up or for continuity funds.

I recommend Members keep this scheme as part of the Council's "armoury" and promote its existence. We cannot afford to offer grants to all those who need funds and this scheme can offer some amelioration.

In terms of focussed support across the Borough I found it pleasing that the 2 significant winners of our little competition were from Downham Market with the third the young Linnets of Kings Lynn.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

A communication package to explain to our Town/Parish Councils and communities details of our corporate plan and financial pressures.
Analysis of the review of Statutory and Discretionary services.
Project Plan for Staff Survey
Financial Plan
Plans and Costs for 21/22 and 21/22 audits of accounts
Review of SLAs and Grants
Continuous budget monitoring
Evolution of subsidiary companies and Shareholder Committees
Procurement review of future plans and process

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Regular weekly Portfolio meetings

27/11 Audit Committee

4/12. Grants and SLAs

“ . Joint Group Meeting

5/12. Grant Thornton Review of Housing Companies

“ . Cabinet

6/12. Further Cabinet briefing

7/12. Group Meeting budget development

11/12. Cabinet Sifting

13/12. MMPB

20/12. Cabinet Briefing

4/1/24. CPP

5/1. Informal Cabinet meeting

8/1. Cabinet briefing

9/1. Council Company training

10/1. IDB SIG

“ . CEO and Officers Statutory ad Discretionary service work analysis

“ Cabinet briefing

11/1 KLACC

Scheduled

18/1 Budget Consultation Ratepayers

“ . Freebridge presentation

“ . Cabinet informal.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

31 January 2024

COUNCILLOR BAL ANOTA - CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY AND CORPORATE SERVICES

For the period 23 November to 31 January 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Management and maintenance of council owned property assets: including industrial estates, Kings Court, Town Hall and the Depot, Public conveniences, Crematorium and Cemeteries.

The staircase improvement works to King's Court have been largely successfully completed. There are a few finishing touches to be completed and some redecoration to be undertaken. The team has also started to look at King's Court office layouts, we still have some teams located off-site and some space at King's Court may be being freed up by one of our sub-tenants. This gives us the opportunity to explore more options with the office accommodation in terms of layout, function, and potential co-location opportunities with other public organisations.

On the wider council property portfolio, the team is starting to look at the longer-term strategic approach to the overall property estate and they will be working on a corporate wide asset management strategy. This will take time to develop and put into place. A largescale overall assessment of the condition of the property portfolio was last undertaken in 2008 and we are keen to do this exercise again in order that we can strategically manage our overall expenditure on repairs and maintenance particularly, however, this will only be one element.

Car Parks and Open Space

I have been holding ongoing conversations with Officers and Portfolio holders regarding revenue generation and cost saving opportunities to enable a well thought through budget proposal to be presented and we will continue with these discussions.

It was quite humbling to attend the quarterly meeting of the Norfolk Parking Partnership to hear such praise for our Parking Operations team who, at the beginning of November 2023, took over the back-office functions for the parking services delivered on behalf of Norfolk County Council for Norwich City Council and for Norwich City Council themselves. Having seen the effort, determination, and pressures this put that team under to ensure it was

delivered on time I must make the unusual step of naming some individuals as without their commitment this scheme would not have been delivered. Whilst times are hard in all public services, work such as this brings valuable contributions towards our corporate overheads, alongside protecting the livelihoods of those officers involved in delivering services. Those senior officers are David Morton, Charlotte Martin and Louise Gayton, and their respective teams.

I always take a keen interest in the parking stays within our car park areas and whilst there are always a number of factors that influence peaks and troughs the figures for November and December are always particularly interesting specifically within our town centre areas and the way in which parking is supporting our town centre vibrancy. I am pleased to report that the King's Lynn Town Centre long and short term stays not only held their numbers over last year but showed a marginal 0.26% increase over 2022 which was, in my opinion, a demonstration of how important our communities see the Town Centre offering: especially during times of cost-of-living pressures and a greater move towards online shopping. Hunstanton saw an even greater, 9% increase in stays but clearly a much milder Christmas than is the norm influenced this and it was great to see large numbers of people visiting the coast to enjoy it over the Christmas period.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

- Portfolio Meetings – TBC
- Wave 4b
- Hethel Innovation Centre

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

November 2023

9th - Portfolio Meeting – MH TB

10th - Leziate Parish Council

14th - Portfolio Meeting – MH

16th - Portfolio Meeting MH (Teams)

28th – Epicentre (Haverhill)

29th – KL Parking Strategy (Teams)

29th – Hunstanton Parking Strategy (Teams)

29th – Planning Committee Training (Teams)

30th – Portfolio Meeting MC

30th - Portfolio Meeting MH

December 2023

4th – Planning Committee

5th – Village Green Meeting

5th – Cabinet

6th – Portfolio Meeting MC

6th – Cabinet Briefing
6th – MintyIn Carol Service
7th – Budget Development
8th – Portfolio Meeting MH TB
11th – Cabinet Sifting
12th – Directorate Plan Setting
13th – Portfolio Meeting MC DM
14th – Norfolk Parking Partnership
15th – Portfolio Meeting DH
20th – Cabinet Briefing
January 2024
2nd - Portfolio Meeting MH TB OJ
3rd – E&C Panel (Teams)
5th – Portfolio Meeting OJ
8th – Cabinet Briefing
10th – Portfolio Meeting MH TB
10th – Cabinet Briefing
11th – KLACC Meeting
12th – Leziate PC
15th – Cabinet Sifting
15th – Cabinet
16th – Portfolio Meeting MH (Teams)
17th – Budget Session

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

31st January 2024

COUNCILLOR – JO RUST CABINET MEMBER FOR – PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

For the period November 9th – January 18th 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters. –

Housing register

1484 live applications

3 Emergency

216 High

487 Medium

778 Low

102 new or change in circumstances forms received - the application forms were unavailable over the Christmas period whilst there were no staff available to assist applicants which explains the lower number

Housing Options

99 applicants given housing advice, 57 new homeless declarations and/or are ongoing investigations.

Lets advised - 16

I attended my first Internal Drainage Board (IDB) meeting on Friday 10th November at Pierpoint House (There are a number of ways that this is spelt, which I commented on). I found it really interesting and useful. As ever, with any of the meeting that I attend, I am happy to provide a photo copy of the notes that I took while present.

Later that day I visited Regis House and met a few of the Care and Repair Team. Much like the other teams in my portfolio they provide an absolutely vital service, which is very often under the radar and overlooked. I was incredibly impressed with what I heard and I believe that our borough really benefits from the services that are available. These services all enable our more elderly or vulnerable residents to be able to live independently for longer. The intention and plans as we move forward are that local councils such as ours, take steps to ensure that local residents don't need to go into hospital. There is a lot of work that needs to take place in order for this to happen, and the financial burden is increasingly being placed on local

government. Sadly, with no significant additional extra funding.

I continue to have regular meetings with the Freebridge Chief Exec and I raise concerns with them about the number of empty properties that there are and the time that it's taking to turn these around and make them available for our residents to bid on. I attended a meet and greet with some of the Board Members of Freebridge on the 13th November. It was good to meet residents who were giving up their time to sit on the board and play a part in the decision making process.

I attended the first Homelessness and Housing delivery sub group meeting, which has not met since the May local elections. I previously sat on this sub group as a member. I will now attend as the portfolio holder with responsibility for homeless and housing standards.

On the 15th November I attended the AGM of Homestart, a community network of trained volunteers and expert support in helping families with young children. This group won an award from King Charles for the amazing volunteer work that they do. It was an honour and a privilege to meet some of the volunteers and staff. There are 185 years of combined experience in the current Norfolk Homestart staff team. They gained 77 new volunteers in 2022/23 and in Norfolk, Homestart has had a presence since 1986. If you have

On 6th December I spoke on Radio Norfolk about the closure of the Norfolk Street Vape Shop and the dangers posed to young people by the use of illegal vapes. While this might appear to some to be a victimless crime, the sale of illegal vapes is all a part of an organised crime group. The substances used in the vapes can be incredibly harmful and they are not manufactured in a legal way. The OCG can also involve people trafficking, money laundering to name but two linked matters.

I have met with the Freebridge exec to further discuss ways that we can work together and to find out the situation with houses with damp and mould. Sadly there are 195 properties which are suffering from this problem. They are treated chemically to eradicate the problem followed by a root cause analysis to ascertain the reason. While some of the problems are structural, some are related to poverty. Freebridge have a support fund that some residents can access. They also have accessed wave 2 funding of the decarbonisation fund and will be concentrating on a fabric first approach. Freebridge are launching their academy in January, working with the College of West Anglia (CoWA) around apprenticeships and skills and learning.

On 17th October I attended an Integrated Care Summit in Norwich. The ICS (Integrated Care System) is now 1 year old. The day was used to hear about some of the wonderful work that is taking place in Norfolk and to discuss what changes we need to make to ensure that we are able to support people to live independently and well for longer and avoid hospital admissions. We had discussions around Courageous Leadership – being bold enough to put forward ideas that go against the “we’ve always done it that way” status.

Sometimes it is about relinquishing power and sharing responsibilities and doing things differently and better. The ICP (Integrated Care Partnership) is ambitious for Norfolk but it will mean doing things differently and sharing budgets. This will be painful in some cases, as our Borough Council provides services which stop people going into hospital which some might think should be paid for by the NHS. We do receive Better Care Funding (BCF) to provide some services, but we also provide some discretionary services which our council funds. I believe that this is appropriate and will continue to make a strong case for the continuation of these services.

I was pleased to attend the 30th Anniversary celebrations of The Purfleet Trust on the same day. It was wonderful to see so many people who had been successfully supported by Purfleet now being part of the staff group and to hear how all those who had been supported into permanent tenancy had retained it.

On 18th October I attended another Freebridge Out and About day along with Cllr Sandell. I spoke to many residents and was pleased to be able to signpost quite a few to apply for Attendance Allowance which is money available to those who need extra help at home due to an illness or disability for those aged over the State Pension Age (SPA). There are two rates, £68.10 for the lower level and £101.75 for the higher rate. Claiming attendance allowance won't reduce any other income you receive and it's tax-free. Claiming it can even help you get other benefits such as Pension Credit, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Support. I'd urge you to check in with your local ward residents to see if they might need it.

That evening I popped along to the West Norfolk Young Carers Halloween Disco. I and a number of other councillors used some of our councillor grant to support. It was lovely to see so many young carers having a wonderful time dancing, apple bobbing, pumpkin carving and chatting. A short period of brief respite from their caring responsibilities.

I've been having some discussions with officers and residents over Community led Housing which is about local people playing a leading and lasting role in solving local housing problems, creating genuinely affordable homes and strong communities in ways that are difficult to achieve through mainstream housing. I am attending an on-line meeting to gain further information to top up that which some of our officers provided me.

On 20th October I visited The Swan Youth Project and I'm so pleased to hear that our council will now provide vital funding to see the work that they do is able to continue. The amazing organization provides a plethora of services to support young people and their families. They're based in Downham Market and I was incredibly impressed by the work that they do and thank Cllr Bullen for inviting me and Anna for giving me the full tour.

I met with the CEO of the QEH later that day and was rather concerned to hear that the deadline of having both phases of the MSCP (Multi Story Car Park) open by January 2025 in order to be able to start the build of the new

hospital by January 2026 might be a real challenge. So far the funding has not been released and is only due mid year 2024. It takes away all flex time and makes that burning bridge of 2030 even more worrying.

On Thursday 26th October I attended one of the 12 Food for Thought sessions taking place in Downham Market. I spoke to the CAB (Citizen's Advice Bureau) officer about the work that they are doing working alongside the Trussel Trust. I then saw the amazing work undertaken by the Lily staff (huge thanks to Betsy, Becky, Judith and Chef Jenny [and Tim B]) for doing so much to make sure the session ran smoothly and was publicized. Radio Norfolk were there to hear more. I tasted 3 delicious dishes cooked up from very little. I took the recipes home and will definitely be making them myself. It was heartening to see so many people attended. Ages ranged from 6 months to 80.

On Friday 27th I attended an online meeting about the South Lynn Health Centre which is in the process of being built.

In the evening I attended my first meeting of our Twinning Towns group which works to arrange our twinning times with Emmerich En Rien. It was lovely to share a relaxing time with so many people and to enjoy a delicious meal provided by Sarah Shapeero-Lown.

On Tuesday 31st October I was at The Place from 10am until 1pm for a Beat The Bills Session. I genuinely can't express how proud I am of the work that our council and our officers do to try to make the lives of our residents better. Each and every one of the council officers in attendance were an absolute credit to our area. I give a huge thanks to Judith, Emma, Jo and all those who made this possible. The large number of our residents who called in and received a first class system to support them was just wonderful. I'd urge you all to attend one when they're in your area. On a really personal note, I called my mum and asked her to come along and as a result, she organized a visit from our Energy Efficiency Officer Jacob, to see what retrofitting energy efficient measures that her house might benefit from. Please do the same for your residents (and of course, family!).

I met with Lynnsport on Thursday 2nd November and learnt more about the proposed 3G pitch. I received some very reassuring information and will be arranging a meeting with concerned local residents to chat with them about it.

On Friday 3rd November I attended a Wash Barrier meeting at the Princess Theatre Hunstanton. There were a number of other councillors present including our Leader, Terry Parish and Cllr Andy Bullen who were speakers. Cllr Squires contributed to our climate change targets by car sharing with me. The meeting was very lively and residents made clear their opposition to the proposal.

I was fortunate enough to be invited to attend an event hosted by Classical Music Rocks 9CMR) on Tuesday 7th November. The quality of the show was amazing. The Tenor Anthony Flaum and pianist Siobhan O'Higgins has played to two schools that day bringing access to classical music to a large

audience of children.

On Wednesday 8th November I attended the ICS meeting held at County Hall and hear more of the partnership work being undertaken.

2 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

7/11/23 – LGA Cabinet Leadership Development Session
7/11/23 - Norfolk IV service meeting
7/11/23 - King's Oak Art Exhibition – Shakespeare's Barn
7/11/23 - Classical Music Rocks – Town Hall
8/11/23 – Integrated Care Partnership Meeting – County Hall, Norwich
8/11/23 – Budget Meeting – Cabinet
8/11/23 – Cabinet Briefing
10/11/23 - IDB meeting Pierpoint House
10/11/23 – Regis House Care And Repair team meeting
10/11/23 – Freebridge meeting
13/11/23 – Homelessness and Housing delivery meeting
13/11/23 – Freebridge Board meeting
14/11/23 – Meeting with Energy Efficiency Officer – South Lynn Community Centre
14/11/23 - Environment and Community
15/11/23 – Homestart AGM – Norwich
16/11/23 – Health and Wellbeing partnership meeting
16/11/23 – Ethics in Politics meeting
16/11/23 – Housing briefing
16/11/23 – KLACC special meeting re special expenses
17/11/23 – United for Warm Homes
20/11/23 – Statement of accounts meeting
20/11/23 – Housing Officer meeting
20/11/23 – CIL meeting - Cabinet
22/11/23 – Cabinet Briefing
23/11/23 Portfolio Meeting
23/11/23 – Full Council
24/12/23 Padel Tennis Meeting
24/11/23 – Place and Health and Wellbeing Partnership collaboration meeting
28/11/23 – Community Led Housing meeting
28/11/23 – R&D
29/11/23 – planning training
30/11/23 – Falls project meeting
30/11/23 – Friends of the Walks meeting
01/12/23 – Meeting with officer re contributions to foodbank
04/12/23 – Joint group meeting
05/12/23 – Greyfriars School – Classical Music Rocks
05/12/23 – Cabinet meeting
06/12/23 – Cabinet briefing
07/12/23 – health and Wellbeing partnership Health Inequalities group
08/12/23 – Portfolio Officer meeting

12/12/23 – Open Road visit
14/12/23 – Housing Portfolio Briefing
14/12/23 – Place partner inception meeting
19/12/23 – Beat the Bills Downham Market
19/12/23 – Padel tennis meeting
20/12/23 – Cabinet Briefing
21/12/23 – portfolio briefing
22/12/23 – Licensing sub committee meeting
04/01/24 – Portfolio meeting
05/01/23 – Cabinet meeting
08/01/23 – Cabinet Briefing
09/01/23 – Planning meeting
09/01/23 – Company Training
10/01/24 – KLACC run through meeting
10/01/24 – Cabinet Briefing
10/01/24 – R&D
11/01/24 – Health and Wellbeing Partnership Meeting
11/01/24 – Housing Portfolio Briefing
11/01/24 – KLACC special meeting
12/01/24 – KLACC sifting
12/01/24 – Freebridge CEO meeting
12/01/24 – Officer meeting
13/01/24 – attended at the local Peace and Justice forum held by Churches Together – Gaywood Allotments Trust
15/01/24 – Cabinet sifting
15/01/24 – Cabinet
16/01/24 – Residents meeting
16/01/24 – Council companies training
17/01/24 – Budget development session
18/01/24 – Meeting re local parking issues
18/01/24 – Portfolio Meeting
18/01/24 – Freebridge member meeting

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

31st January 2024

Councillor Simon Ring - Cabinet Member for Tourism, Events and Marketing

23rd November 23 to 31st Jan 24

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

This period is a quiet time for a number of my portfolio areas. For events in particular this is a period of rest and repair. A number of physical resources have needed replacement and repair, funded by set aside reserves.

Tourism and Marketing

Visit West Norfolk - An Update for 17/11/23 - 17/01/2024:

For the Christmas/New Year period we continued to promote a substantial amount of local seasonal events and activities, from pantomimes to Christmas-related family activities.

Digital Promotions

During this winter period of time we have sent out the following e-shots to our visitor contacts:

- Festive Events this December in West Norfolk 2023 [sent 30/11/2023]
- Mark your Calendars! 2024 Holiday Inspiration in West Norfolk [sent 14/12/2023]
- Winter Days in West Norfolk 2024 [sent 04/01/2024]

During this winter period of time we have sent out the following e-shots to our tourism business contacts:

- Reminder: Love Your Grant Scheme [sent 23/11/2023]
- Book the Hunstanton Observatory for your visitors and last call for Tourism Forum event [sent 29/11/2023]
- KLIC and connect Business Networking Event and Grant Support [sent 07/12/2023]
- FREE Promotion on the Visit West Norfolk website [sent 21/12/2023]
- Leadership Training, Accessibility Toolkit and Recruitment Support [11/01/2024]

We uploaded the following new content on the *Visit West Norfolk* website

during this time too:

- 'New Year's Eve in West Norfolk 2023' blog post [published 05/12/2023]. Highlighted New Year's Eve events and accommodation offers in west Norfolk.
- 'Rainy Day Activities in West Norfolk' blog post [published 08/12/2023]. Featured indoor activities or attractions including museums, historic sites, indoor play areas, cinemas, and art galleries.
- 'Mark your calendars! Unique events in West Norfolk 2024' blog post [published 13/12/2023]. Promoted holiday inspiration and upcoming events in west Norfolk.
- Updated: 'Free Things To Do in West Norfolk | Winter 2024' blog post [02/01/2024]
- Updated: 'Dog Friendly West Norfolk' blog post [05/01/2024]

We also created and uploaded the following social media posts during this time:

- **Social media posts about our blogs:**
 - 'Christmas in West Norfolk 2024' blog post.
 - 'Free Things To Do |Autumn 2023' blog post.
 - 'New Year's Eve in West Norfolk 2023' blog post.
 - 'Mark your calendars! Unique events in West Norfolk 2024' blog post.
 - 'Wintertime in West Norfolk' blog post.
 - 'Road Safety Awareness for Pedestrians and Cyclists' blog post.
 - 'Dog Friendly West Norfolk' blog post.
 - 'Sustainable Transport in West Norfolk' blog post.
 - 'Rainy Day Activities in West Norfolk' blog post
 - 'Nature Reserves and Wildlife Parks in West Norfolk' blog post.
 - 'Free Things To Do in West Norfolk | Winter 2024'
 - 'Golfing in West Norfolk' blog post.
 - '20 Historical Figures with Connections to West Norfolk' blog post.
 - 'Fishing in West Norfolk' blog post.
 - 'West Norfolk... Naturally' page.
 - 'Safe and Responsible Travel' page.
 - 'Shopping' page.
 - 'Food & Drink' page.
 - 'Parking' page.
- **Social media posts about local events:**
 - 'Christmas at the Guildhall' event [10/12/2023]
 - 'New Year's Day Walk' [01/01/2024]
 - 'King's Lynn Christmas Lights Switch-On' event [26/11/2023]
 - 'Downham Market Christmas Lights Switch-On' event [26/11/2023]
- **Social media posts about general tourism themes:**
 - New Year inspiration
 - 'National Walk Your Dog' month [January]
 - Black Friday
 - Tourism Industry ['Business Listings', 'Event Uploads', 'Tourism

Trade News', 'Economic Impact of Tourism' reports, and more].

- Visitor newsletter sign-up form.
- King's Lynn
- Downham Market
- Hunstanton
- West Norfolk coast and countryside.
- King's Lynn Architecture
- Explore West Norfolk website
- History and heritage
- Walking and cycling trails.

We continue to upload events to the Visit West Norfolk website event listings and to proactively contact tourism businesses who are not yet featured on the Visit West Norfolk website for future inclusion.

New Projects

Software

After recently being granted authorisation by the BCKLWN ICT Working Group to use such new software, from early December 2023 we have been using the User Generated Content Platform Snapsea (www.snapsea.io) through our Instagram account for the very first time - to enhance, inform and grow our future promotional interactions with potential visitors to west Norfolk by utilising high quality authentic visitor content of the local area. It is early days, of course, but the first month of our use of the software does look promising.

West Norfolk Tourism Business Event

After the recent West Norfolk Tourism Forum AGM (held Wednesday 6th December 2023), we are currently finalising the booking of presenters and the full agenda for the first West Norfolk Tourism Business Summit event, to be presented by the tourism forum and held in King's Lynn in March 2024.

Shared Prosperity Fund Projects

We are continuing various work and tender processes on a set of SPF funded projects, which include regeneration of items at the West Lynn Pavilion, enhancements to certain Downham Market Town Centre public realm assets, and the formation of a Hunstanton Observatory events programme for a series of four events of varied themes.

The Hanse League

With King's Lynn being an active member of the Hanse League, we have now taken over the Vice Chair and administrator roles for the Europe-wide Modern Hanse League splinter group called the *Hanse Sustainable Working Group*. Our first meeting with the group in these new roles was held on 16th January 2024, with the working group primarily focusing on sharing best practice and

learning examples, across the sustainable development goals set by the UN, on a Europe-wide basis. These goals include the implementation and growth of sustainable tourism business practices and much more.

Members of this working group include representatives from many other Hanse towns and cities across Europe

As you can see, the Tourism and Marketing team have kept busy.

Alive West Norfolk Corn Exchange

Theatre:

- New brochure came out at the end of November.
- Pantomime sales reached 21,000 with secondary spends up 8% on previous year.

Cinema

Number 1 place in October was the colourful *characters Trolls Band Together* followed by Martin Scorsese latest masterpiece *Killers of the Flower Moon*. *The Great Escaper* did well returning after a huge success in early in October along with *A Haunting in Venice*. November has performed well with the epic *Napoleon*, 2 *Lithuanian films*, 4 sold out *silver 60's* screenings and extra screenings of now popular *Toddler Tuesdays*.

December saw a slate of major family flicks, comedies, and a couple of awards contenders. The biggest film of the month was the blockbuster origin story *Wonka* a Timothée Chalamet-led family favourite, portraying the rise of the iconic chocolatier *Willy Wonka*. Disney's new animation *Wish* started early December. We also had 4 sold out screenings from *Andre Rieu* for our Christmas Event Cinema audience, followed by a re-release of the beloved Christmas classic *Elf*, starring Will Ferrell. Plenty of Christmas titles, including *Muppets Christmas Carol*, *The Grinch*, *It's a Wonderful life*, leaving the Majestic Cinema to show *Love Actually* & *Home Alone*.

Marketing.

We have in the past asked to advertise on the "A" board and the new LED screen on the Tuesday Market Place, also the poster sites at the Multi-story car park and bus stops, not necessarily all at once or for free but want the opportunity to use these spaces as they are not always being used to their full potential. We have had pushback from Council staff not been able to get a yes from anyone.

We are now being asked to advertise on our AWN digital screens by

regeneration, Lily & Careline, which we are happy to do free of charge.

Can I ask the board to investigate and help going forward between us and the Council so that a contra deal could be set up? This would be mutually beneficial for both parties and show good cooperation across the businesses.

Town Hall

Currently:

- Wedding bookings are good for 2024.
- Town Hall had a stand at the Kings Lynn Wedding Fayre on 7th January.
- Staff arranged an archives coffee morning which was well received and has led to some future paid for bookings from Hickathrift House.

Culture at the Guildhall

Generally Increased Numbers for the run up to Christmas and events now running at capacity (I would like to increase 'capacity' and am looking at ways to do this).

Dickensian Christmas at the Guildhall was booked to capacity: families engaged with Father and Mother Christmas, craft activities, games, food, drink, carol singers and live animals in the form of owls. Feedback from the event has been really good and an event on this theme is planned for 2024. This event also had the benefit of volunteers from CWA as part of the scheme we are running with them (we have been and given talks at CWA to inspire students to come and get involved and it seems to be working).

Our partnership with the Ministry of Justice is continuing with community payback people assisting in maintaining the garden at the Guildhall.

School plays returned to the Guildhall in December which has not happened in a while with schools using the space for both their in house and public facing Christmas shows.

We partnered with Norwich Puppet Theatre to offer schools a truly magical version of Midsummer Night's Dream. This was featured on the one show with the Guildhall in November and schools came and packed the auditorium for two showings of this production.

We have started a bi-weekly Art Club at weekends. The first one was sold out with a waiting list so we have increased capacity.

The Guildhall is hosting the Heritage Education Network meeting which is an attempt to bring all the schools together and provide support to learning across the town in the areas we know the Guildhall is strong.

We have an exhibition opening shortly and activities for families in February Half Term.

AWN Lynnsport etc

Health, wellbeing and commercial.

Improving community health and wellbeing remains the main priority on the AWN agenda, and the AWN Wellness Referral scheme continues to grow and become embedded into the Primary Care Network to offer specialist exercise referral across our sites.

With 171 referrals to date, the work we are now doing with Active Now has really engaged local GP surgeries, which historically have been challenging to onboard and build partnerships with. Prior to Active Now, referrals from our local surgeries were less than 5% - they are now the lead contributor into our scheme at 62%

We have gained further funding to support the Active Now Falls Prevention programme, that will be rolled out early 2024. This will see 14hrs per week of engagement from AWN staff to support the programme - a majority of which will be out in the community. To support this, 8 staff members have undertaken a seated based exercise class qualification and a one-day specialist course in 'behaviour change' was undertaken on 5 Dec, training 10 AWN staff.

The company, on behalf of the council, is currently in discussion with Sport England and in partnership with Active Norfolk in relation to potential new national funding to support the borough's work in promoting health and wellbeing via physical activity. This is at the earliest stages and an update will be available once there is more detail to report

AWN continue to be active in the community in terms of outreach to further improve awareness and support local business and charities. AWN offered a day of health checks for the BCKLWN to support International Men's Day in November, providing a valuable educational day for staff. The rotary club and a local Parkinson's support group also benefited from the same health checks, breaking down barriers for these special populations to engage with our services and we were pleased to see a good uptake of participants joining our membership scheme.

Commercially – membership sales continue to outperform last year since the gyms have been refurbished and we have for the first time introduced a fully flexible monthly membership which makes membership at our venues more affordable and without the need for a full year up front commitment. The

annual membership remains to give people the choice of monthly or annual – but early signs in January show a healthy sales upturn compared to last January. However a number of people are suffering from the cost of living crisis and have had to consider their financial priorities when it comes to having a membership. With a focus on retention, plans to further improve our member experience over the upcoming months include scheduled member education sessions to help customers understand how to get the most from the technology and capability of the cardio equipment, gym floor-based classes, and further virtual class provision. A recent marketing commission to highlight the breadth of what Alive offer the community for marketing campaigns will be used in our January campaigns. These member testimonials have also helped highlight the great work the team are doing.

Events:

In late October Kaset skatepark held the annual Halloween Hell skate jam, with keen skaters travelling from Bristol, Newcastle and Manchester to attend one of the UK's largest Halloween skateboarding events. Norfolk County Council's Targeted Youth Support Services (TYSS) are now hiring the skatepark on a weekly basis to provide a safe space for young people who can speak to youth workers, the Matthew Project and other support services. The police also attend to provide advice, engagement and bike security tagging free of charge.

November saw Alive Downham host a pool party for the West Norfolk Autism Group who provide support and guidance to individuals of all ages whose lives are affected by autism. The pool party gave families from the group the opportunity to have fun in the pool using the large floats with their family members in a controlled environment.

During December, all sites hosted an event aimed at engaging members and the local community, Lynnsport sold out their Christmas lunch serving 80 people, and customers at Oasis and Downham enjoyed a social morning of Mince pies and coffee. These events provide great community spirit and support those suffering from loneliness.

Events

This is a time of rest and repair for the events team, as well as a time for planning the huge number of events, both by the Council and supporting outside bodies. We are not only planning for all of the now well established events, but we are also looking to maximise the assets we have to provide new events without utilizing additional resource. It is important, at a time of financial difficulty for our residents, that we put on as many free events as we can both afford and cope with, and that we will continue to do. I will be listing the planned events in a future update.

Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

I have had numerous meetings with officers and outside bodies

Officers

Oliver Judges
Duncan Hall
Martin Chisholm
Philip Eke
Bethany O'Brien
Philip Bayfield
Jemma Curtis
Tim Fitzhigham
Honor Howell
David Ousby

Outside bodies

Civic Society
Town Guides
Festival
Hunstanton Action Group
Old Lenensians
Norfolk Records Committee
Norfolk Museums Committee
Friends of the Walks
Kings Lynn Museum
Stories of Lynn and Archives
Conservancy Board
Downham Market Town Council Committee

I have regular scheduled meetings with most of the above officers and will continue to meet and fact find with outside bodies including those already met with.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

31st January 2024

COUNCILLOR MORIARTY- CABINET MEMBER FOR DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

For the period 19 October 2023 to 18th January 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

I would first like to thank officers for their work in compiling this report.

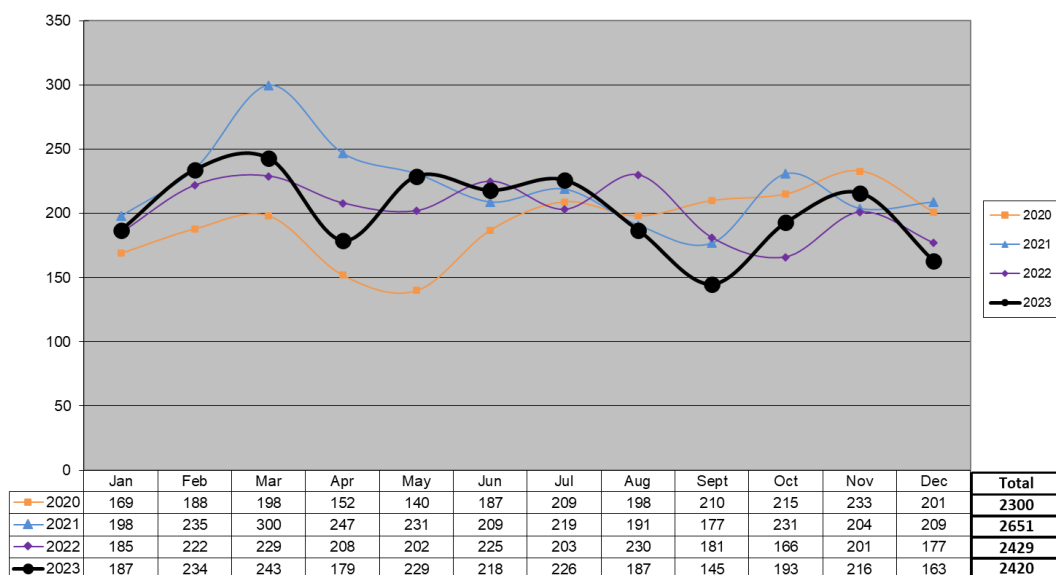
In my role as Chair of the West Winch Local Stakeholders Meeting I assisted in publicising the recent Information Evening on the access road organised by Norfolk County Council. It was very well attended and I am grateful to residents for the interest shown, and to officers and members of the road design team for being there and contributing to the five hour event.

The West Winch Housing Access Road application has been submitted to the County Council and is currently being validated. A meeting of the Local Stakeholders is due on Monday 22nd January and I may add to my report verbally at Full Council.

Planning and Discharge of Conditions applications received

Application numbers finished almost identical to the previous year.

Planning and discharge of condition applications received



Progress with recruitment

Planning Control – A Planner left the Authority on 14th January. A recruitment campaign held before Christmas was unfortunately unsuccessful with 3 vacant posts remaining, including the vacant South Team Principal Planner post. Contract planners have been instructed in the interim but we will review and go back out to advert in the next month.

Planning Policy – following a successful recruitment process I can confirm Alex Fradley has been appointed commenced on 29th January. Some of you will remember Alex as he has worked in the Policy team previously. The Graduate Planner post has been filled, one of the validating officers was successful.

Planning Enforcement – the Customer Support Officer post has been filled. One of the Enforcement Officers has left, and another will be retiring early February. The recruitment process has commenced.

Planning validation – as a result of a validating officer being successfully recruited to the Planning Policy team, we are going through the recruitment process and currently shortlisting candidates for interview.

Major and Minor dwelling applications and householder applications received comparison

	1/1/21 – 31/12/21	1/1/22 – 31/12/22	1/1/23 – 31/12/23
No. of Major dwelling applications rec'd	27	17	15
No. of Minor dwelling applications rec'd	328	302	253
No. of Householder applications rec'd	902	755	616
Total	1257	1074	884

*Minor dwelling applications = up to 10 units

Major dwelling applications = over 10 units

2022/23 performance for determining planning applications 1/1/23 – 31/12/23

	National target	Performance
Major	60%	88%
Non – Major	70%	86%

Appeal Performance – decisions made by The Planning Inspectorate 1/1/23 – 31/12/23

	Dismissed	Allowed
Planning appeals	32	18
	64%	36%

Enforcement appeals	6	0
	100%	0%

The higher the number of appeals allowed, the more The Planning Inspectorate (PINS) is going against the council's decisions, so a low figure of appeals allowed (upheld) is clearly preferable. For context the national average for planning appeals allowed annually has historically been around 34% post NPPF.

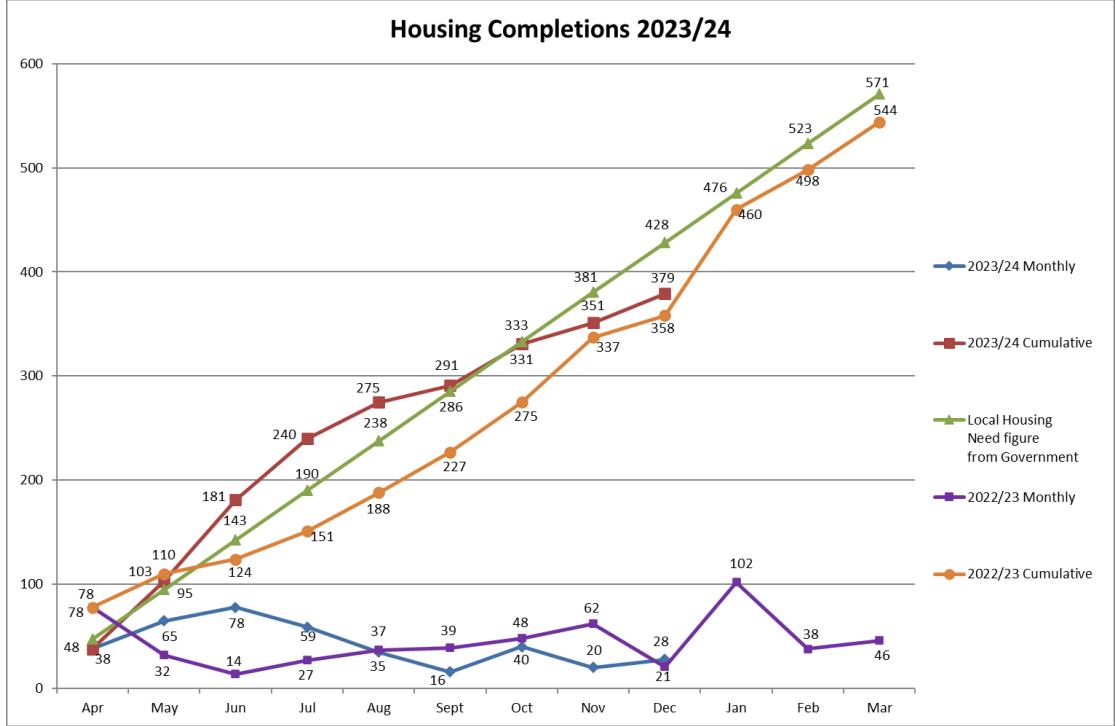
Revenue income 2023/24

Planning fees have increased and came into force on 6th December 2023. Fees for Major applications increased by 35% and Non-Major applications by 25%. Pre-application fees will also increase as they are based on a percentage of the planning fee.

Projected	Actual	Variance with projected
April 23 – Dec 23	April 23 – Dec 23	
£825,000	£747,212	-£77,788

Housing Completions

20 houses completed in November and 28 in December. Currently completions are down 49 on projected based on a local housing need figure from Government of 571 but up 21 compared to the same time last year.



Planning Control update

On 19th December 2023, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) update,

effective immediately, was published. The update was announced during the Secretary of State's speech about the government's ambitions for housing and infrastructure and the roll of planning in helping achieved them.

The NPPF update covers placemaking, housing delivery, neighbourhood plans, custom and self-build and greater protection for agricultural land amongst other topics. Training will be rolled out to Planning Committee Members in the coming months regarding NPPF changes.

The Secretary of State (SoS) also announced his ambitions on improving planning performance including planning decisions being taken on time and be robust in their reasoning and all authorities must have an up-to-date local plan. The SoS requires greater transparency and faster processes and will be taking direct action on poor performing LPAs.

Additional financial support has already been provided in the form of increased planning fees (came into effect 6th December 2023) and up to £100,000 Planning Skills Delivery Fund monies per LPA to clear the backlog of planning applications and to develop specialist skills and expertise. Officers have been successful in securing a £100,000 grant.

CIL Update

CIL Infrastructure Projects – 2024 Applications

Cabinet approved the CIL Governance Policy Document in December. The CIL Funding Applications opened on 1st January, and will be accepted up to 5pm on 1st February.

CIL infrastructure funding for 2024, will be selected by the Spending Panel, to projects that fall within the following criteria:

Green Infrastructure Projects

- Projects relating to public open spaces such as new or improved footpaths and cycleways to support new development.
- Installation and improvement of public play areas and equipment.
- Open spaces used for education, to support environmental initiatives.
- Improvement of habitats for wildlife and nature, to alleviate the effects of new development.
- Environmental services such as flood defence or absorption of air pollution.

Leisure Time Activities Infrastructure

- Infrastructure projects, to support accessible leisure time activities such as new facilities, improvement of existing facilities or upgrade of facilities to enable an increase of usage, to support new development of an area.

The amount of CIL available, to be allocated in this round of applications, is £878,336.31.

CIL Project Update - to date:

- £3.2m of CIL has already been allocated to 205 projects within the Borough.
- 118 Projects have been completed and £1.7m paid.
- As projects require match funding, additional funding excluding CIL, used for these projects totals £3.9m

CIL Parish Payments – to date:

In addition to funding Projects, Parishes with development also receive CIL Parish Payments. To date £1.1m has been distributed to 81 parishes.

Local Plan Update (ongoing examination of the replacement Local Plan 2021-2039)

A summary of the representations received through the recent consultation on the additional evidence base (which ended on 20 October 2023) was reported to the Local Plan Task Group on the 22 November 2023. The original representations and summary representations (together with the Council's response) have been sent onto the Planning Inspectors, for their consideration.

Since November 2023, the Planning Policy team has been focused upon the need to put forward land allocations to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople (GTTS), identified in the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA), June 2023. A programme/ timeframe for the ongoing GTTS work for the Local Plan examination is set out below:

- 8/ 10 January 2024 – Consideration of cabinet report regarding Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Potential Sites and Policy Consultation document by Local Plan Task Group and Regeneration & Development Panel.
- 15 January 2024 – Cabinet approval of GTTS Potential Sites and Policy Consultation document, for public consultation.
- 26 January – 8 March 2024 (inclusive) – GTTS Potential Sites and Policy Consultation document consultation.
- w/c 22 April 2024 – Possible extraordinary meeting of Full Council, to approve GTTS site allocations and policies for submission to the Planning Inspectors.

Dates have also now been agreed for the reconvened Local Plan examination hearings, as follows:

- 26-28 March 2024
- 16-19 April 2024

Further hearings dates for the Gypsy and Traveller policy examination are likely to be end of June or July 2024. This would be followed by consultation on Proposed Main

Modifications to the Local Plan by late 2024.

Neighbourhood Planning Update

During 2023, several Neighbourhood Plans have come forward. As of January 2024, there were 18 “made” (adopted) Plans in place. Details of recently made (since 2023) and emerging Neighbourhood Plans are set out as follows.

Recently “made” Neighbourhood Plans

	Current position
Burnham Market Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2036	Passed at referendum, 21 September 2023; “made” 26 September 2023
Gayton and Gayton Thorpe Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036	Passed at referendum, 9 November 2023; “made” 20 November 2023
Stoke Ferry Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036	Passed at referendum, 24 August 2023; “made” 29 August 2023
Watlington Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2036	Passed at referendum, 7 December 2023; “made” 13 December 2023

Emerging Neighbourhood Plans

	Current position
Downham Market Neighbourhood Plan	1 st draft Plan (Regulation 14) consultation October/ November 2021 – preparation subsequently stalled; Plan submission anticipated 2024
Grimston, Pott Row, Roydon and Congham Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2036	Examination commenced August 2023; anticipated to finish, spring 2024
Marshland St James Neighbourhood Plan	“Call for sites” December 2023; 1 st draft (Regulation 14) version Plan anticipated for publication, summer 2024
North Wootton Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2036	Submitted, 12 September 2023; followed by pre-examination (Regulation 16) consultation (finished 24 November 2023) Examination to commence early-2024 – appointment of examiner expected to be confirmed late January/ early February 2024
Old Hunstanton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2036	Decision Notice issued 20 November 2023; due to go to referendum, 8 February 2024
Pentney Neighbourhood Plan	1 st draft Plan (Regulation 14) consultation March-May 2023; Plan submission anticipated 2024
Ringstead Neighbourhood Plan	Preliminary draft Plan subject to consultation with Environment Agency/ Historic England/ Natural England (March/ April 2023), regarding Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Habitat Regulations Assessment – further work needed before publication; 1 st draft Plan (Regulation 14) consultation anticipated early 2024
In addition, several other Parishes are designated Neighbourhood Areas, but progress with plan-making is unknown or at an early stage	Burnham Overy (designated 5 December 2023); Dersingham; Docking (designated 22 December 2023); Great Massingham; Ingoldisthorpe; Outwell; Shouldham; Syderstone; Tilney St Lawrence; Walpole; Walpole Cross Keys (review of 2017 Neighbourhood Plan); West Dereham

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

Wednesday 31st January 2024

COUNCILLOR TERRY PARISH - LEADER

For the period 23 November to 31 January 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

The New Year is moving along and there is always much to do so it is fortunate that we have an extra day in which to do it. New Years are often a time for reflection, so it is apposite that I have had occasions to meet both with New Starters and those officers of Long Service in the Borough Council. The wheel turns and I hope that the new will, in the fullness of time, become the 'old', perhaps with diversions elsewhere to gain different experiences.

We are particularly good at providing training to our officers to make them better at their jobs and to allow them to aspire to posts of more responsibility. We also take on apprentices and their appetite to get on is well supported. This requires mentoring by senior staff who must be in post and likely need to be on site more as it is difficult to foster inhouse staff development without that level of expertise. Consequently, I have no regrets at enabling such staff to have pay conditions in 2023 which recognised their value and encourage necessary internal or external recruitment.

The New Year has also generated a plethora of news stories, in fact they began around Christmas time. Some provided 'sensational' news headlines. One was concerned with planning conditions. These are important and should be followed and, if not, enforcement should follow. Contrary to the beliefs of some people, they cannot be dismissed at a whim. If changes to them are considered necessary, then an application to amend them can be made to planning who may refer the request to planning committee. A significant complaint from Parish Councils has been the failure to follow up on breaches of planning conditions. I am glad to say that things are improving with additional staff in the enforcement team.

In italics below is part of the content of an email recently received from a Parish Council. It nicely sums up concerns that parish Councils have and the need to ensure that they are properly informed about planning matters. I am having second meetings with all Chairs or their representatives on 21st February, 2.30 start and 6pm start. I ask all Borough Cllrs to take note of concerns raised at those meetings (I will copy you in) and to help and support Both Borough and Parish's to resolve them.

'XXX from the Parish Council attended (meeting last November) and was very pleased to hear that Parish Council views and comments are being taken seriously especially surrounding planning. The Parish Council look forward to working constructively bringing the Borough Council and Parish Councils together.

Similarly, we would welcome additional measures to ensure that Parish Councils are consulted on revised applications and discharge of conditions applications – which

again, have often been determined without the PCs being made aware of the process. We see these as very positive initiatives which would build trust and co-operation between the two tiers of government.

This will assist in giving the Public more confidence that the democratic process is working correctly and that their voices are being heard.

Overall, the Parish Council were very impressed with the way in which this consultation/discussion was held on very pertinent and important matters which would make a significant difference to the positive and effective functioning of all parties. We would therefore like to thank you for initiating this process and look forward to supporting you and the Council in bringing these elements forward in the future.'

Another significant issue raised by Parish Councils last November was the increasing number of vexatious or difficult actions being taken against Parish Councils or members of. I am glad to say that some help that can be provided by the Borough is now being organised.

Returning to news stories, newspapers feed on soundbites which they acquire from either people, agenda items or minutes. The better journalists ask for a reply or check the veracity of such quotes before publication. Some don't. Feeding newspapers half-truths at best, does not serve a useful purpose and wastes resources.

Money seems to be a looming story and others may have made the position clear. The Council spends more than it receives and tops up the shortage from general reserves. The general reserve pot is falling and will currently reach the minimum permitted before the next Borough elections. This is not due to us; it has been the case for some years. There are other reserves, ring fenced reserves, which have purposes to serve. Extracting money from those is a risky and short-term measure and could create further financial problems down the line unless investigation reveals it can be done with little risk. The Peer Review said, '(Use of reserves) it is not a sustainable strategy for the medium term'. And. 'A plan needs to be developed to bring the council's finances back into alignment and peers saw evidence that this is underway in the development of a Cost Management Plan.'

We need to spend less and earn more. Many councils are in the same position and much of the problem is down to government hence my letters to our MPs which were prompted by a request from the District Council Network.

I did try and get a fair share for west Norfolk of the business rates growth which would be retained via the Norfolk business rate pool for 2024/2025 but it required an agreement with the other Districts and County. They appeared happy with their lot. This year we are continuing to pursue IDB finding from government and Liz truss MP is helping with that. We are also asking Council agreement on council tax changes to second homes and empty properties. Other changes will come forward in the budget.

I briefly mentioned the peer review in which some of you, (160 including those external to the Council), were involved. The report identifies strengths and weaknesses and suggests strategies which might address the latter. The new administration had a mention, 'the new political leadership have hit the ground running'. We also had, 'There has been a positive reception to the new administration among partners. The new corporate strategy and financial management got positive

comments as did changes of governance to the Council's companies.

There were 8 recommendations, all of which are set out in the report. Most had work started on them before the report and work has been progressed since. Some require consultation, reorganisation and change all of which will be examined and plans developed as part of the action plan which we are required to prepare as part of the Corporate Peer Challenge Review process. The action plan will be considered by Cabinet at the 5th March 2024 meeting.

May the next 11 months be happy for you (and me).

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Session for all Parish Councillors on 21st February 2.30 pm and 6 pm
Tour of the new build health hub in King's Lynn
Celebration event for the apprentices
Opening of the Mart

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

In addition to cabinet meetings, cabinet briefings, communications briefings and multiple one offs with officers or councillors:

28/11/23	Leaders and S151 officers North Norfolk
29/11/23	Conservative Leader/Leader Weekly Meeting Independent Leaders/Labour Leaders Weekly Catch-up Hunstanton Advisory Group update call
30/11/23	Norfolk Leaders Group Meeting
01/12/23	James Wild MP Unison
04/12/23	Planning FCH CEO and Chairs/Leader LGA Independent Council Leaders Meeting Coastal Working Group meeting Joint Group Meeting
07/12/23	Local Government Finance Policy Statement webinar Meet Arboriculture officer Budget Development Group Mayor at home
08/12/23	Leader/Deputy Leader and MO Catch-up
09/12/23	Meeting regrading 2nd homes council tax/additional council tax Guildhall
12/12/23	Climate change Solar Farm
13/12/23	Member Major Project Board
14/12/23	LGA Leadership Academy
15/12/23	LGA Leadership Academy
18/12/23	LGA Independent I Leaders Meeting
19/12/23	Portfolio Meeting – Central Services
20/12/23	Gypsy/Traveller sites meeting Pay award
22/12/23	Leader/Deputy Leader and MO Catch Up
02/01/24	CEX/Leader Briefing

03/01/23	E and C Panel
04/01/23	Cllr Adams North Norfolk CPP
05/01/24	Leader/Deputy Leader and MO Catch Up
08/01/24	Local Plan Task Group Council companies training
10/01/24	R and D Panel
11/01/24	Training on statement of accounts Special KLACC meeting
15/01/24	Conservative Leader Meeting
16/01/24	Council companies training
17/01/24	Pay award Meet New Starters Budget development session
18/01/24	Long service awards Consultation with Representative Bodies of Non-Domestic Ratepayers and Voluntary Sector Representatives about proposed Borough Council Budget Plans for 2024 – 2028 Freebridge member briefing
19/01/24	Unison Springwood School
23/01/24	Council/companies training
24/01/24	Norfolk Rivers IDB
25/01/24	Labour Leader meeting
26/01/24	Public Sector Leaders Board
30/01/24	NHS tour
31/01/24	Apprentice event HAG update call Full council