



COUNCIL MEETING

Agenda

Thursday, 31st July, 2025
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

23 July 2025

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 **Thursday, 31st July, 2025** in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn to transact the business shown below.

Yours sincerely

Kate Blakemore
Chief Executive

BUSINESS TO BE TRANSACTED

1. PRAYERS

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the following meetings (previously circulated):

- 26th June 2025
- 17th July 2025 – Extraordinary Meeting – The Guildhall
- 17th July 2025 – Extraordinary Meeting – Award of Honorary Alderman Status.

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 (Page 7)

To receive petitions and public questions in accordance with Procedure Rule 20.

8. REVIEW OF PROPORTIONALITY (Pages 8 - 10)

9. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES (Pages 11 - 15)

Members are requested to liaise with their Group Leaders in advance of the Council meeting, should they wish to put themselves forward to serve on any Outside Bodies.

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: 21st July 2025

CAB36: Staff Cost of Living Pay Award

CAB37: Changes to Social Housing Allocations Policy

CAB39: Council Tax Discounts and Premiums Resolution*

CAB41: Leisure Facilities Feasibility Study

*please note the dispensation granted by the Standards Committee on 16th July 2025. Any Members with an Interest in CAB39 will be required to declare this at the meeting, but will not have to leave the room during consideration of the item and can contribute to the debate and vote on the matter.

11. NOTICE OF MOTION

To consider the following Notice of Motion (2/25), submitted by Councillor Heneghan:

National Gambling Reform

This Council notes:

This council notes that gambling companies have been found to be targeting the least well-off areas for new sites. Residents have expressed concerns about this in King's Lynn and at present the borough council is effectively powerless to stop it.

Section 153 of the Gambling Act 2005 enshrines the 'Aim to Permit' principle, which requires councils to approve gambling licences where minimum criteria are met, regardless of local community opposition.

This Council resolves to:

- Join a growing coalition of 40+ other local authorities and write to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport calling for urgent reforms to restore decision-making powers to local authorities.
- Support the Six Point Plan for Gambling Reform:
 - Reform the 'Aim to Permit' policy to allow councils to refuse gambling premises that pose risks to local welfare and safety.
 - Place all gambling premises (including adult gaming centres and bingo halls) in a single planning category to prevent loopholes.
 - Give councils the power to consider local social and health factors, such as debt and proximity to schools, when reviewing planning applications.
 - Direct the proceeds from the new statutory levy on gambling operators, to independent public bodies and local health authorities for harm prevention and treatment.
 - Introduce greater restrictions on gambling advertising, sponsorships, and promotions – especially those reaching children and vulnerable groups.
 - Halt any proposals that further liberalise adult gaming centres, including spin speeds and staking levels on B3 machines.

12. CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS (Pages 16 - 55)

In accordance with Council procedure rule 8, to receive reports from Cabinet Members to be moved en bloc. Members of the Council may ask up to four 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, then non aligned members, followed by 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 60 minutes for all Cabinet Members and the Leader

Climate Change and Biodiversity – Councillor M de Whalley

Culture and Events – Councillor S Lintern

Planning and Licensing – Councillor J Moriarty

Environment and Coastal – Councillor S Squire – TO FOLLOW

Finance – Councillor C Morley

People and Communities – Councillor J Rust

Parking and Open Spaces – Councillor P Bland

Deputy Leader and Business – Cllr S Ring

Leader – Councillor A Beales

13. MEMBER'S QUESTION TIME

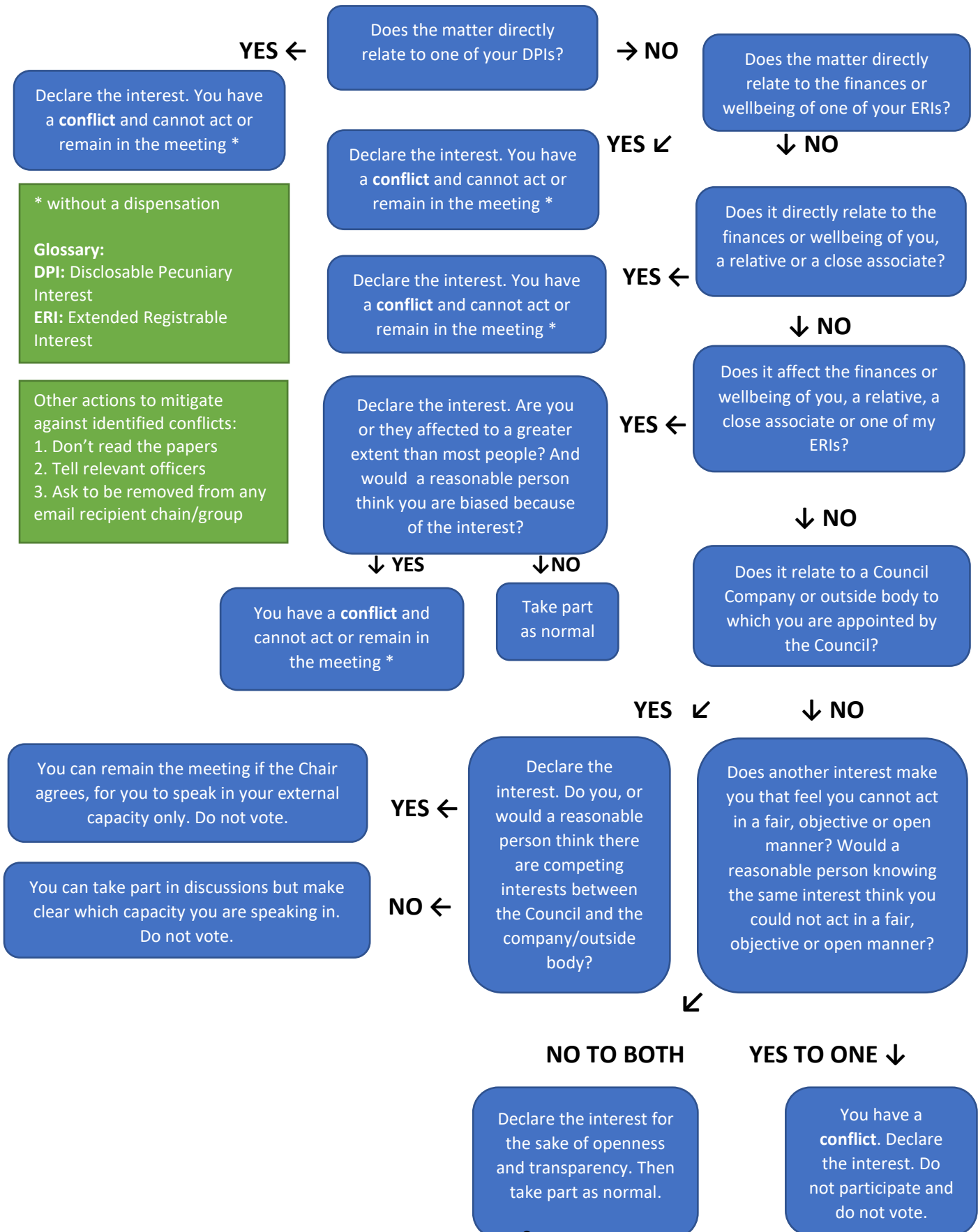
In accordance with Procedure rule 9, Members of the Council may ask any questions of the Chair of any Council Body (except the Cabinet).

Kate Blakemore
Chief Executive

DECLARING AN INTEREST AND MANAGING ANY CONFLICTS FLOWCHART



START



Public Questions to Council on 31 July 2025

1 Question from Karen Champion

As an authority with responsibilities towards air quality, noise levels and waste collection is it time to consider holding more modern forms of celebration that the default to large, noisy, polluting firework displays of Chinese made fireworks?

The celebrations of the Olympics has shown that there is a huge variety of inspirational ways of celebrating events with light shows, drone based displays and music.

Is it time to show that this authority has moved with the times and stopped spending our hard earned money on this waste of natural resources?

2 Question from Julia Irving

To be a resilient community we need to be informed engaged and proactive. The Borough Council is in a leadership position in the community and could, within the limitations of its powers, nurture that resilient community.

For example, food insecurity is a very predictable outcome of climate breakdown, as crops fail in conditions of drought, extreme heat and flooding, causing food shortages, price increase and severe food poverty , to speak of the very least of the problems . A proactive approach could include collective planning with residents, suppliers and distributors of food, encouraging residents to grow their own food, increasing allotments and community gardens.

As there is not a committee or planning body set up specifically to face and plan for the emergency's consequent upon climate and ecological breakdown, should one be put in place?

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Open				
Lead Member Councillor Alistair Beales Email: cllr.alistair.beales@west-norfolk.gov.uk				
Lead Officer: Rebecca Parker E-mail: rebecca.parker@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Officers consulted: Monitoring Officer		
Financial Implications NO	Policy/Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications YES	Equality Impact Assessment req'd NO	Risk Management Implications NO

Date of Meeting: 31st July 2025

REVIEW OF PROPORTIONALITY

It is the duty of the Council to review the entitlement of political groups to seats on committees in line with the proportionality rules set out in the Rule C of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. When changes are made to Group Memberships a further review can be undertaken on request in accordance with the section 17(b) of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990.

As a result of Councillor Nash leaving the Independent Partnership, proportionality is updated as per the attached table for Council to consider.

RECOMMENDED: That the proportional allocation of seats be amended in accordance with the table set out within the report.

1 Background

1.1 The rules relating to proportionality as per Section C of the Local Government Housing Act 1989 are set out below:

- a) No political group can have all the places on a Committee (the exception is the Cabinet).
- b) The Group that has the overall majority on the Council is entitled to the majority of seats on each Committee.
- c) The aggregate number of seats across all Committees is allocated in accordance with each group's entitled.
- d) The number of seats on each Committee is allocated in accordance with each group's entitlement.

2 Changes to Proportionality

2.1 Following Councillor Nash leaving the Independent Partnership, it has been requested that proportionality be reviewed.

2.2 Current Political make up of the Council is as follows:

21 – Independent Partnership
19 – Conservative
7 – Labour
4 – Reform UK
2 – Progressive Group
2 – Non- aligned

2.3 Council is invited to approve the amended proportionality as set out in Appendix 1.

This will result in the following changes to Council Body Membership

Audit Committee

Independent Partnership lose one seat and Conservatives gain one seat

Licensing and Appeals Board

Labour loses one seat and Conservatives gain one seat

Environment and Community Panel

Reform UK loses one seat and Progressive Group gain one seat

APPENDIX 1:

POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY TO BE AGREED BY FULL COUNCIL - 31ST JULY 2025

	Total Membership	Conservative	Independent Partnership	Labour	Progressive	Reform	Check Total
Total No. of Members	53 plus 2 non-aligned	19	21	7	2	4	55
Appointments Board	9	3	4	1	0	1	9
Planning Committee	15	5	6	2	1	1	15
Licensing Committee	13	5	5	1	1	1	13
Licensing & Appeals Board	13	5	5	1	1	1	13
Standards Committee	7	2	3	1	0	1	7
Corporate Performance Panel	12	4	5	2	0	1	12
Environment & Community Panel	12	4	5	2	1	0	12
Regeneration & Development Panel	12	4	5	2	0	1	12
Audit Committee	9	4	3	1	0	1	9
Total Seats	102	36	41	13	4	8	102

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Lead Member: Councillor Beales, Leader of the Council			Other Cabinet Members consulted:	
			Other Members consulted:	
Lead Officer: Rebecca Parker E-mail: Rebecca.parker@west-norfolk.gov.uk			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 July 2025

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Purpose of Report

This report seeks the appointment of representatives to serve on outside bodies and partnerships, which fall within the General, Parished and Unparished categories. Nominations for representatives to serve on outside bodies and partnerships which fall within the Scrutiny and Regulatory categories have been made by the Policy Review and Development Panels are also submitted for approval by Council as set out in point 5.1 of the report.

Members who would like to put themselves forward to serve on Outside Bodies should notify their Group Leader in advance of the meeting.

Recommendations

- 1) That the Council appoints representatives to serve on the outside bodies and partnerships listed in the Parish level and General categories as shown at Appendix 1.
- 2) That Council approves the appointment of representatives nominated by the Panels to serve on outside bodies and partnerships which fall within the Scrutiny and Regulatory categories as shown in point 5.1 of the report and also included in Appendix 1.
- 3) That the reporting arrangements as shown in section 3 of the report and the proposed review as shown in Section 4 of the report are noted.

Reason for decision

To ensure continued involvement in the community by the Council

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Cabinet at its meeting on 24th July 2025 confirmed a number of Executive appointments to outside bodies and partnerships. Further appointments are made by the Council in the following categories:

- Scrutiny and regulatory roles
- Parish level representation, parished and unparished areas
- General appointments

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 or 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. This will make it 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 All Members are encouraged to use the Members' Bulletin to report on the work of any such organisation they are appointed to.

4.0 REVIEW OF OUTSIDE BODIES

- 4.1 A review of all Outside Bodies, including Cabinet and General Appointments, will be conducted over the summer to ensure that representation on Outside

Bodies links in with the Corporate Priorities of the Council and that Councillors are aware of their role on the bodies and the Council's position. Reporting arrangements will also be reviewed to ensure that Councillors are feeding back key issues to the Council and Senior Officers as required.

5.0 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES

5.1 Scrutiny and Regulatory Roles

Nominations made by the Panels are listed below:

- Borough Council/College of West Anglia Liaison Board - **Councillor Osborne**
- King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee - **Councillors Bland, Bubb and non-Councillor Bill Davison.**
- Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee – **Councillors Devulapalli and Kemp as substitute.**
- West Norfolk Community Transport Project – **Councillor Everett**
- King's Lynn Football Club – **Councillor Bland**

5.2 General Appointments, Parish Level Representation, Parished and Unparished Areas

Appendix 1 lists the bodies for which representatives are to be appointed by Council. It also lists the current representatives for information.

- 5.3 Members who would like to put themselves forward for the bodies listed in Appendix 1 should inform their Group Leader in advance of the Full Council meeting. Group Leaders are requested to notify Democratic Services of any nominations. This will assist with meeting preparations.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Mileage and subsistence allowances for Councillors attending meetings.

7.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

APPENDIX 1

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES TO BE MADE BY FULL COUNCIL ON 31 JULY 2025

Scrutiny nominations made by the Panels (to be confirmed by Council) are also shown below.

Part Cabinet/part Council appointments

Name of Organisation	Number Representatives of	24-25 Appointment to be agreed by Council (Cabinet Appointment is included for information)
Borough Council/College of West Anglia Liaison Board	1 x Cabinet 1 x nominated by E&C (Councillor Osbourne nominated by E&C)	Beales (Cabinet) Osborne (Council to appoint following E&C nominations)
King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee	1 x Cabinet 3 x E&C 1 x Council	De Whalley (Cabinet) Bland, Bubb and Bill Davison (Council to appoint following E&C nominations) Kemp (Council)

Council Appointments

Name of Organisation	Number Representatives of	24-25 Appointments
Brancaster Commons Committee	1	de Winton
Burnham Overy Harbour Management Committee	1	Sandell
Gaywood Allotment Trust	4	Collop, Rust, Wilkinson and Christine Hudson (non-Council)
Hunstanton and District Festival of Arts	1	Bubb
John Sugars and Backhams Almshouses Charity	2	Bone and Heneghan
King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Charity	2	Bubb and Jones
King's Lynn Community Football	1	Rust
King's Lynn Conservancy Board	4	de Winton, de Whalley, Bearshaw and Jill Bennett
King's Lynn Town Football Club	1 E&C	Bland

Norfolk Police and Crime Panel and Norfolk Countywide Community safety Partnership Scrutiny Sub Panel (the same Members need to be appointed to both bodies)	1 + Sub	Ware and Henghan
Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1 + sub	Devulapalli and vacancy (substitute)
North End Trust	1	Jones
Outwell Charities	1	Crofts
Queen Elizabeth Hospital Governors Council	1	Kemp
SNAP Downham Market	2	Chair Osborne Vice Chair - vacant
SNAP Hunstanton	2	Chair Beal Vice Chair Dickinson
SNAP King's Lynn	2	Chair Ware Vice Chair Bone
Sibelco – Leziate Quarry	2	Devulapalli and de Whalley
West Norfolk and King's Lynn Girls School Trust	1	Sandell
West Norfolk Community Transport Project	1 x E&C	Everett
West Norfolk Youth Advisory Group	1	Rust
William Cleave Educational Foundation	2	2 x vacancies

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

31 July 2025

COUNCILLOR MICHAEL de WHALLEY - CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

For the period 19 June 2025 to 22 July 2025

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Vehicle Fleet Review

The project seeks to decarbonise the Council's vehicle fleet. To inform this, Mitie were commissioned to analyse the fleet and recommend a decarbonisation pathway. The final report has been received has been considered by Corporate Leadership Team and discussions regarding capital programme planning for a demonstrator project are ongoing.

Schools Climate Competition Project

Schools pre-recorded their entries and were judged by a panel on 2 July at an online celebration event.

Judging Panel:

Cllr Rust / Cllr de Whalley / Elena Almey-Parish / Laura Ferrier (from Groundwork East).

Winners were as follows:

1st place – Weather station from Weather Shop – West Winch

2nd place – Books from Bags of Books - Whitefriars

3rd place – Bug hunt kit from Amazon and bug hotel from CJ Wildlife – Ashwicken

Prizes have been received and will be taken to the schools at the start of September. The winners will be presented with their prize at a school assembly in early September where it is hoped the Mayor will also be in attendance.

Solar Together

The group buying scheme was promoted this year via a targeted mailshot. Installations that have been completed:

- 65 solar Photo Voltaic (PV) installations
- 5 battery installations
- 7 EV charging point installations

Total householder investment in the 2024 solar PV scheme was £480,518 with an estimated saving of 57 tCO₂e.

Since the council has participated in Solar Together, householders have invested over £1.9 million in solar PV with an estimated annual carbon saving of 161 tCO₂e.

We will continue with the scheme for 2025/2026.

Carbon Audit

The 2023/24 carbon audit is available on our website and work is underway on the 2024/25 audit. We are looking at processes to speed up and automate this and any data collection it requires.

Carbon Literacy Training

Our e-learning provider is processing the training material for use in the council's e-learning platform, which will be made available for all staff and members shortly.

Beuys' Acorns

Following a successful application for Community Infrastructure Funding, a circle of seven oak trees has been planted on a landmark site near Harding's Way, South Lynn and will form part of a nationwide environmental focused art project called "Beuys' Acorns". This work has been undertaken in collaboration with GroundWork Gallery, Harding's Pits Community Association, artists Ackroyd and Harvey, Whitefriars Primary Academy and Lynn Museum. The circular footpath has been laid, with seating and interpretation board to follow by the end of the summer. The first community events have taken place led by the artists Ackroyd and Harvey including a presentation at the town hall on 11 June 2025.

Ferry

Repair works commenced on 11 June. Ben Ellis, the ferry operator, kindly took me, officers and my opposite number at Norfolk County Council, Cllr. Graham Plant, on the ferry to inspect the works on both landings. As of the time of writing the West Lynn Steps are all but finished and half of the King's Lynn landing steps are completed.

This Council has committed significant resources and continues to support, and work closely with, Norfolk County Council, The Conservancy Board and the operators to ensure that the ferry service resumes as safely and quickly as possible. Please note that the contractors, working in and adjacent to the river, face challenging conditions affected by the tide and weather, which means it is not possible to provide a definitive timeline, although we remain confident that works will be completed in the next few weeks.

The Borough Council has appointed Greyfriars PM to support a study that will inform future infrastructure improvements to the ferry landings. Bringing a project manager on board at this stage will allow them to develop a thorough understanding of the project and effectively support the council from feasibility through to eventual delivery. Greyfriars PM is currently reviewing all existing information and will begin stakeholder engagement soon.

Regular public updates on our progress are being posted on our council social media, shared with the local press and on the website, link below...

<https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/ferry>

Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP)

Recent meetings have received updates on the Norfolk and Suffolk Energy Plan and Integrated Water Strategy, Norfolk Net Zero Communities project and Carbon Trust report on community energy in Norfolk.

The Partnership Manager attended the council's Climate Change Informal Working Group on 19 May 2025 to provide a briefing on activities.

The Partnership Manager has taken an alternative post and, in the interim, duties have been shared amongst partnership lead officers.

Norfolk Net Zero Communities

The project reaches a conclusion in July 2025 with research findings considered by several workshops that involved the 7 participating communities. Workshop attendees discussed the project's legacy and potential for future action.

A final report will be published on the NCCP website for the project's funders Innovate UK.

LED Lighting - Internal

Proposals have been received for completing internal lighting at Lynnsport, Oasis, BCKLWN Depot and Regis Place. Most of these designs have been submitted to us by eEnergy, pending due diligence checks. However, following revisions to scope, eEnergy have suggested the works may no longer be something they would be interested in progressing and we may need to go out to tender to procure these works, subject to budget allocation (circa £50k).

LED Lighting – Lynnsport Sports Pitch

We have received various designs/proposals for upgrading the remaining sports pitches at Lynnsport. We are currently in consultation with the Pelicans Hockey club.

Streetlighting Phase II

The contract has been awarded to Amey, an experienced streetlighting contractor. We are in the process of arranging an initial meeting to confirm the contract management requirements and enable works to start.

Re:Fit

Works are ongoing to improve performance and place more duty on the heat pumps, thereby delivering gas and carbon savings. King's Court and Lynnsport have made improvements, most notably by the remedial works on Lynnsport's domestic hot water systems. Both sites have demonstrated they can effectively satisfy space and hot water requirements from the heat pumps, although boilers are retained as backup.

At other sites, further actions are planned and are under consideration, to include additional temperature sensing and air handling unit controls to better manage and control heating systems, with a view to maximising run time on the heat pumps.

We have been advised that the equipment manufacturer, Panasonic, are in the process of instructing an independent audit to inspect the Air Source Heat Pump installations.

Our third and final measurement and verification report is forthcoming, which will quantify and compare the achieved with the anticipated savings. This will then form the basis of an options paper regarding the missed savings. Despite the improvements made, we remain some way adrift from the savings outlined and guaranteed at the investment grade proposal stage.

Solar Panels

We have received formal proposals/designs for two sites, being Downham Market Leisure Centre and KLIC. The Corn Exchange proposal is still under development.

The Corporate Leadership Team have approved the project in principle, subject to agreeing necessary governance, procurement and third-party consent from Downham Market Academy. Budget is yet to be identified.

We are currently carrying out due diligence on eEnergy's credentials, as well as the proposed framework route, in consultation with finance and procurement.

Biodiversity Competition

This council has launched a new competition to celebrate wildlife in West Norfolk gardens.

Residents can enter one of four individual categories:

Best window box garden
Best child under 14 garden
Best small garden
Best large garden

There are also two community special categories:

Nature friendly Parish or Ward
Longest Pollinator Corridor in the Borough

Entries should be accompanied by a maximum of four representative photographs and when entering for one of the special categories your entry should include a plan of the area being entered. One entry is permitted per household.

The competition is open for entries and the closing date for receipt is 12pm on Friday 1 August 2025.

For more details please visit:

<https://west-norfolk.gov.uk/gardenwildlifecompetition>.

Florence Fen

Changes to the site's management plans have now largely been implemented. Our focus has shifted towards an exciting opportunity to collaborate with Norfolk County Council. This partnership will involve translocating reptiles from land associated with the West Winch Housing Access Road to this site, which will both support natural biodiversity here and facilitate the West Winch development. We are updating our management plans to reflect this new initiative and are also exploring ways to improve public access to the site over time.

Climate

Global heating reached an estimated 1.40°C in June 2025. If the 30-year warming trend continues unchanged, global heating will reach 1.50°C by May 2029.

June 2025 was the third-warmest June on record globally, with an average surface air temperature of 16.46°C, 0.20°C cooler than the record set in June 2024. June was about 1.30°C warmer than an estimate of the June average for 1850-1900, the designated pre-industrial reference period. It was only the third month in the last 24 with a global temperature less than 1.5°C above the pre-industrial level.

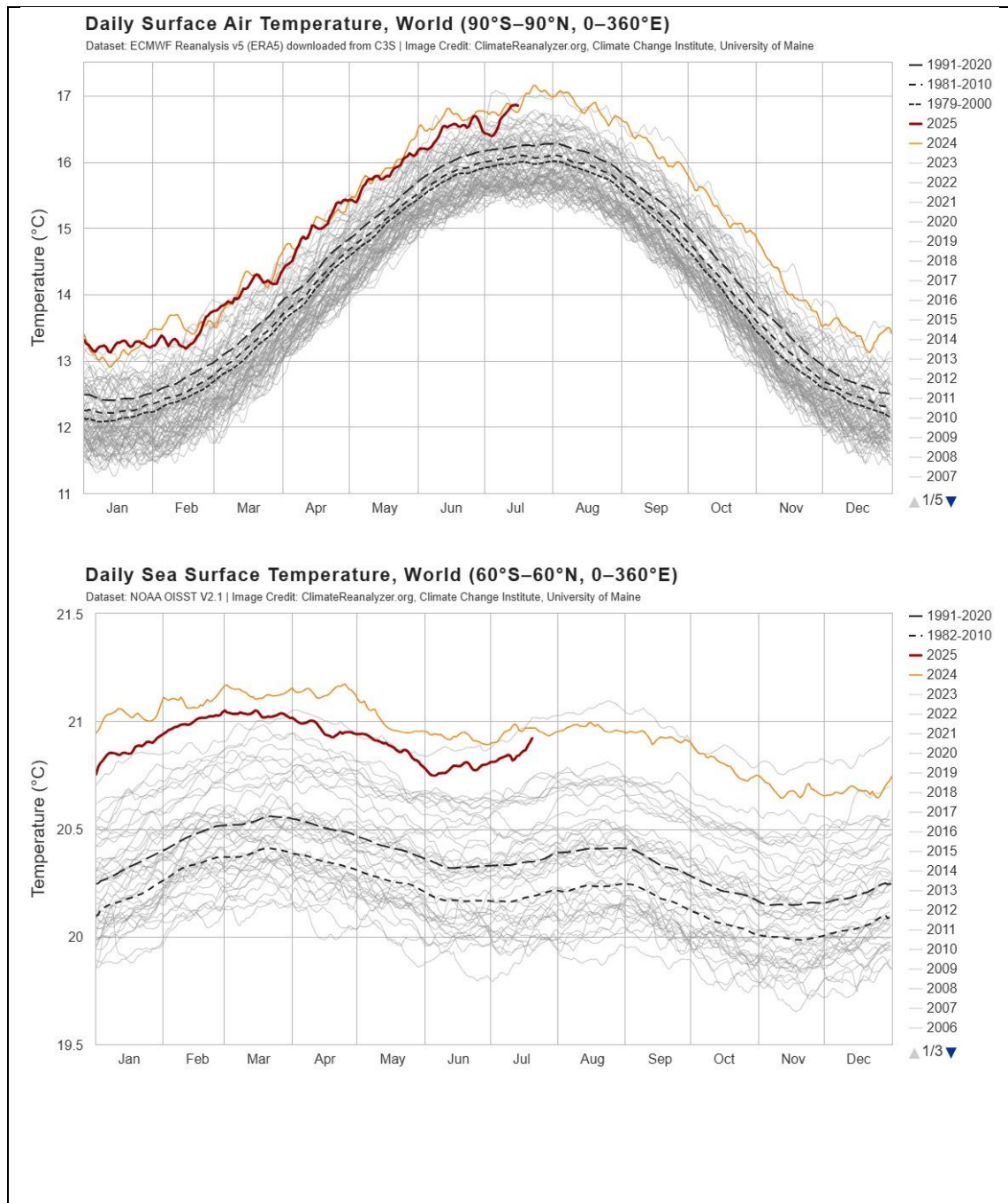
The average global sea surface temperature (SST) for June 2025 over 60°S to 60°N was 20.72°C, the third-highest for the month in the dataset, 0.13°C below the record set in June 2024. Sea surface temperature is defined over the global extrapolar ocean, from 60°S to 60°N. This is used as a standard diagnostic for climate monitoring.

Data source: European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts - ERA5.

Arctic sea ice extent for June 2025 was 10.7 million km², circa 6% (0.7 million km²) below the 1991–2020 average, the second-lowest monthly extent for June in the 47-year satellite record.

The average Antarctic sea ice extent for the month was 12.6 million km², about 9% (1.3 million km²) below the 1991–2020 average, ranking as the third-lowest June extent in the satellite record.

Data source: OSI SAF Sea Ice Index v2.2



2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Beat Your Bills Roadshow

King's Lynn (North Lynn Food Hub) – 13/08/2025 12:00-16:00

Stoke Ferry (Village Fete) – 25/08/2025 12:00-16:00

The Cost of Living Working Group will meet soon to discuss the future of Beat Your Bills.

King's Lynn Climate Change Business Expo

Scheduled to take place on Tuesday, 23 September 2025 at The Corn Exchange, King's Lynn. This will build on the success of the inaugural expo in June 2022. The event is for local businesses to showcase work undertaken to reduce their carbon emissions. It is also a networking opportunity. Businesses are rapidly signing up and places are strictly limited.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Cabinet Briefings

Cabinet Sifting

Cabinet

Member Briefing – Guildhall of St. George

Fens 2100+ Programme Stakeholder Forum

NCCP Portfolio Holders Group

Armed Forces Day Flag Raising

Environmental Groups

Multi Agency Group – Groundwater Challenges

Regeneration and Development Panel

West Norfolk Climate Champions Celebration Event

Town Deal Board – Active and Clean Connectivity Project Board

Environment and Community Panel

West Norfolk Transport & Infrastructure Steering Group

Ferry Landing Inspection

KL Internal Drainage Board – Gaywood Catchment Study Stakeholder Group

Lynn Museum – Exhibition Opening

King's Lynn Conservancy Board

Portfolio Holder Briefings and updates:

Climate Change Weekly Updates

Ferry Updates

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Council Meeting - 31 July 2025

COUNCILLOR SUE LINTERN - CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND EVENTS

For the period 16th June to 20th July

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Summer Events Programme

The Borough's summer events programme is well underway, and I have had the opportunity to observe firsthand the exceptional work carried out in the development, planning, and delivery of these events. Each event is meticulously assessed, with health and safety consistently prioritised. The team's attention to detail is evident at every stage—from setup to dismantling—as equipment is safely and efficiently transported from one venue to another.

A prime example of the team's adaptability was the successful relocation of the *Folk in the Town* festival. Originally scheduled for a different venue, the event had to be moved to King's Staithe Square due to nesting doves in the staging area. Thanks to proactive and thorough planning, the team responded swiftly and effectively, ensuring the festival could proceed without cancellation.

Among the other events supported by the Borough Council this month were:

- **Festival Too:** A fantastic lineup of bands contributed to six nights of free, high-energy entertainment for the whole community. The Events Team received glowing feedback from performers, praising the exceptional organisation and welcoming atmosphere.
- **King's Lynn Festival:** This year's festival features a unique audio trail offering a guided tour of the town through the voices and memories of local residents. While classical music remains at the heart of the festival, it also embraces a diverse mix of genres to appeal to a wide audience.
- **King's Lynn Free Film Night:** This year's series kicked off with a screening of *Top Gun*, offering the community a fun and laid-back evening under the stars

The continued success of these events is a testament to the hard work, flexibility, and professionalism of the Events Team and all supporting departments.

Public Display of Artwork

One of the ongoing initiatives under the portfolio is to increase public access to our stored artworks. The Museums team is actively identifying and preparing artworks for public exhibition across various borough buildings. After reviewing available spaces and selecting appropriate pieces, conservators are now assessing the artworks for display suitability. This work will continue as we identify further suitable locations.

Additionally, the team has made significant progress in digitising much of our collection. A growing number of these artworks are now available online via the Art UK website. Looking ahead, there is potential to explore digital projections of selected artworks onto our iconic buildings—an idea under future consideration.

Museum Exhibition: “May The Toys Be With You”

As part of my museum portfolio responsibilities, I attended the launch of “*May The Toys Be With You*” at Lynn Museum. This engaging exhibition showcases one of the UK’s finest collections of vintage Star Wars toys. After months of planning, the exhibition is now open to the public and will run until May next year. It is a great example of how our museums continue to attract and engage audiences of all ages through creative and nostalgic programming.

Cultural Strategy and Service Level Agreements (SLAs)

The Borough’s Cultural Strategy continues to guide all cultural activity and investment. Current SLAs are under review to ensure all funded projects align with the strategy and uphold our core values. There is a strong commitment to supporting a broad range of cultural initiatives across the Borough.

Tourism Development

Together with our Cultural Ambassador, Cllr. Ware, I recently attended a presentation centred on tourism and the Hanse initiative. Our Tourism Officer continues to deliver outstanding work in analysing visitor demographics and advancing sustainable tourism across the Borough.

There is an increasing recognition of the need to balance traditional promotional methods—such as printed leaflets—with modern digital marketing strategies. These now include engagement with influencers and bloggers to reach a wider, more diverse audience. Our tourism strategy remains focused on sustainability, accessibility, and innovation. As part of this commitment, we need to consider necessary infrastructure enhancements, including improved coach parking facilities, to better accommodate group travel and support tourism throughout the year.

In addition, I am pleased to report that our Tourism Officer has recently been elected as the English Commissioner for the Hanse League for the next three years. This prestigious role offers a valuable platform to increase national and international engagement. One of his key priorities will be to promote greater involvement of young people in Hanse-related activities. This may also present an exciting opportunity to establish a twinning arrangement with

another Hanseatic town, fostering cultural exchange and educational collaboration.

Support for Town and Parish Councils

I recently attended a Parish Planning Presentation that offered valuable insights into current and future planning initiatives—particularly the newly adopted *Local Plan*. The presentation was informative and well-received, highlighting key changes and opportunities for local involvement in the planning process.

Importantly, the presentation materials will be made available to all town and parish councils, ensuring wider access to this crucial information.

However, it was noted with concern that funding for *Locality*, which previously provided essential support for developing Neighbourhood Plans, has now been withdrawn. This change may impact the ability of some communities to progress their planning work, and alternative support mechanisms may need to be considered moving forward.

Later this year, all Town and Parish Councils will be invited to a meeting with the Leader of the Borough Council. This session will take place after submission of the Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) business plan and will offer an important forum for dialogue and questions.

Engagement with MP on Local Governance and Planning

I recently met with our local Member of Parliament, Terry Jermy, to discuss the importance of continued support for Town and Parish Councils amid upcoming changes to the planning system. A key focus of our conversation was ensuring that local residents retain a meaningful voice in planning matters as reforms are implemented.

We also discussed the ongoing Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) process and the need to ensure that local communities are not overlooked. It is vital that Town and Parish Councils are adequately supported throughout this period of transition, and that local representation remains a cornerstone of decision-making.

Guildhall Development Project

A significant milestone has been reached with the Full Council's approval to proceed with the Guildhall development project. This exciting redevelopment will transform the historic Guildhall and its surrounding complex into a major cultural and heritage asset for King's Lynn and West Norfolk. With an anticipated completion date in early 2028, the project promises to enhance the town's cultural offering, celebrate its rich history, and create new opportunities for community engagement and tourism.

I look forward to being involved in the progress of this landmark project as it moves from planning into delivery.

Across the portfolio areas—ranging from events and cultural development to tourism and community engagement—significant progress is being made. The commitment of our officers and partners continues to deliver meaningful outcomes for the Borough and its residents.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

I will continue to attend several of the events taking place throughout July and August, gathering feedback and engaging with the various teams involved. This will support ongoing reviews of our approach, as we look for new ways to enhance both the quality and delivery of our events programme.

Looking ahead, we will soon begin exploring new ideas and options for next year's schedule, building on the successes and lessons learned from this season.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

15/6 – Hansa Festival
16/6 – King's Lynn & West Norfolk area museums committee
16/6 – Planning training
17/6 – Tourism & Hanse presentation
17/6 – Meeting with Cultural Ambassador
17/6 – CPP
18/6 – Portfolio meeting with MC
18/6 – Cabinet briefing
18/6 – Members Guildhall briefing
23/6 – Cabinet sifting
24/6 – Northwold village hall meeting
24/6 – LGA teams meeting
24/6 – Portfolio meeting with SR and DH
25/6 – Parish Council planning presentation
26/6 – Museum artwork review meeting
26/6 – Full Council meeting
30/6 – Planning committee
3/7 – Lynn museum tour
7/7 – Cabinet briefing
7/7 – meeting with SD
7/7 – Planning committee training
7/7 – Cabinet special meeting for Guildhall
9/7 – R&D
9/7 – Chequer House Gallery
11/7 – NALC training course
12/7 – Meeting with Terry Jermy MP
15/7 – Lynn museum – "May The Toys Be With You" launch
15/7 – LGA teams for LGR

17/7 – Portfolio meeting with MC

17/7 – Full Council meeting

20/7 – King's Lynn Festival – Concert at St. Nicholas, Dersingham

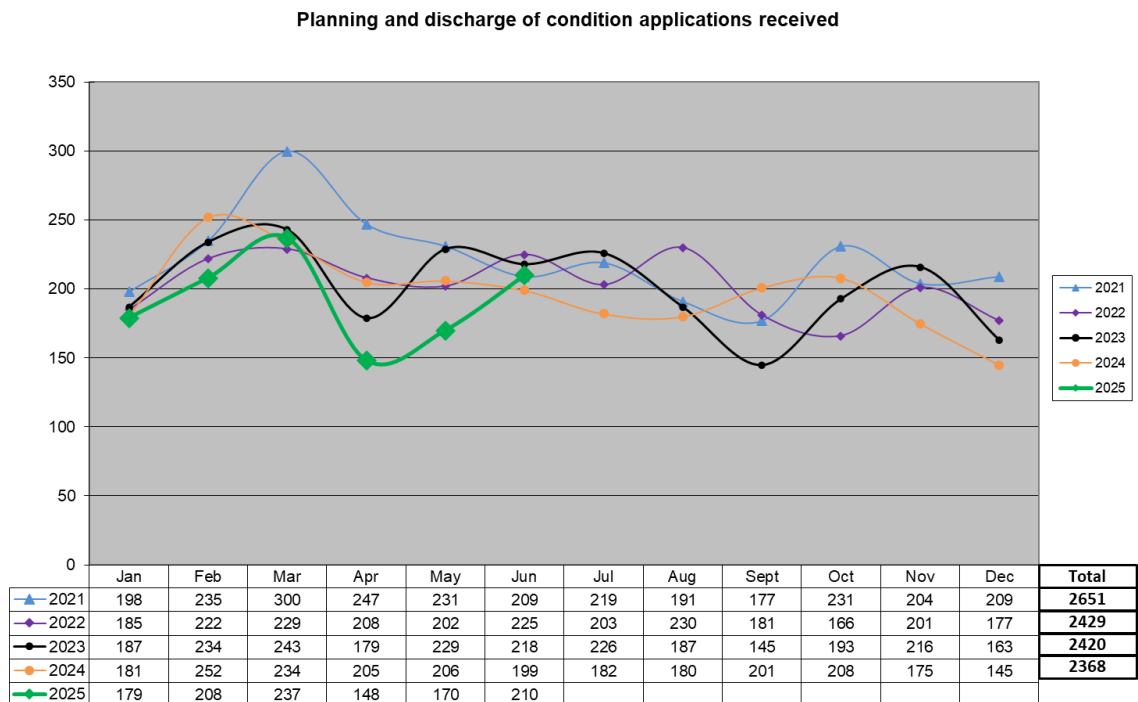
CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

31 July 2025

COUNCILLOR JIM MORIARTY - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & LICENSING

Planning and Discharge of Conditions applications received

Application numbers at the end of June are down compared to same period last year, -125 applications.



Major and Minor dwelling applications and householder applications received comparison

	1/7/22 – 30/6/23	1/7/23 – 30/6/24	1/7/24 – 30/6/25
No. of Major dwelling applications rec'd	17	15	27
No. of Minor dwelling applications rec'd	319	209	280
No. of Householder applications rec'd	701	590	597
Total	1037	814	904

*Minor dwelling applications = up to 10 units

*Major dwelling applications = over 10 units

2025 performance for determining planning applications 1/1/25 – 30/6/25

	National target	Performance
Major	60%	83%
Non – Major	70%	93%

Appeal Performance – appeal decisions made by The Planning Inspectorate between 1/7/24 – 30/6/25. This measure is different to the ‘quality of decision’ measure.

	Officer delegated		Committee overturns		Total	
Appeals	Dismissed	Allowed	Dismissed	Allowed	Dismissed	Allowed
Planning	54	11	6	4	60	15
	83%	17%	60%	40%	80%	20%
Enforcement	2	1				
	67%	33%				

Quality of decisions

This measure calculates the percentage of the total number of decisions made by the Local Planning Authority on applications that are then overturned at Appeal.

The Assessment period for this measure is two years up to and including the most recent quarter plus 9 months. Therefore, performance at the end of May 2025 is calculated as follows:

Planning applications determined by the Local Planning Authority between 01/10/2022 to 30/9/2024 (not the date the Local Planning Authority receives the appeal decision from the Inspectorate) plus 9 months to allow appeals to be determined by the Planning Inspectorate = 30/6/2025.

The threshold for designation for both Major and Non-Major is 10% - this is the figure that should not be exceeded, otherwise there is a risk of the Authority being designated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

MAJOR		
No. of Decisions Issued	No. Allowed on Appeal	% Overturned
98	3	3.06%

NON-MAJOR		
No. of Decisions Issued	No. Allowed on Appeal	% Overturned
2915	27	0.93%

Revenue income for financial year 2025/26 (Planning and Discharge income)

Figures are based on a full year projected income budget of £1,218,500.

Projected	Actual	Variance with projected
April 25 – June 25	April 25 – June 25	
£304,625	£375,050	+£70,425

Development Management staff update

Following interviews on 17th June we have appointed to the remaining Principal Planner position; this is subject to satisfactory references. Unfortunately, we were unable to appoint to the Senior Planner / Planner vacancy. We are currently reassessing if, and when, we might go back out to advert.

Community Infrastructure Levy

CIL governance and Spending

CIL Officers have been working hard to collate the information received within the PAS Report, and details will be presented to the CIL Spending Panel at the end of July. The initial stage for members will be to prepare the CIL Policy Document and agree a Spending Strategy, these will be the overarching documents relating to the allocation and spend of CIL going forward. The expected completion of this work, for approval by Cabinet, is September.

Stage 2 of this project will be for the panel to formulate processes to identify and administer infrastructure projects, including when the next round of funding will take place. Based on the amount of work required by officers and the Spending Panel, it is likely that the next funding round will be early 2026.

Members will be kept up to date with progress of this project.

CIL Income and Expenditure

Officers have collected nearly £12m CIL since adoption in 2017, relating to development in the Borough. The forecast of CIL income for FY25/26 is £3m.

The table below shows the current CIL Income as of 17 July for this FY, and overall income and expenditure:

	Amount Received 8840	Admin 5% 8820	Parish Payment to pay 4407	CIL Fund Pot 8841
Annual Total: FY 25/26	£1,373,141.57	£68,657.08	£206,644.48	£1,097,840.01
TOTAL PAYMENTS RECEIVED:	£11,778,187.26	£588,902.08	£2,051,070.98	£9,138,214.20

CIL Projects

To date the Panel have allocated almost £6m to 269 projects in the Borough, of which 225 have been completed.

CIL Infrastructure Fund: £9,138,214.20	
As of 17/07/2025	Totals
Total Funds Allocated	£5,967,592.37
Spent	£4,827,423.29
Allocated - Not Spent	£1,140,169.08
Not Allocated	£3,170,621.83

Based on the current CIL income to date, there is £3m funding available to be allocated to projects, when the new Spending arrangements have been implemented.

Local Plan / Planning Policy

The planning system should be genuinely plan-led. Succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for meeting housing needs and addressing other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings. These are not my words but those of the National

Planning Policy Framework, which sets out the planning policies for England and how these should be applied. Why do we need a local plan? To do just that, it allows for an assessment of need, demonstrates that needs have been met, sets the framework for consistent decision making, allows for meaningful engagement, and it is the only plan at this level that is independently examined. Furthermore, the law requires that planning applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Local Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

We have a plan led system and for this you need a plan, hence the Borough Council have our Local Plan.

To support implementation of the Local Plan we have held session for members, officers, agents, and parish/town councils. We have also published a series of explanatory notes and an online interactive planning policies map. Going further we are currently developing an interactive version of the Local Plan. The Local Plan and supporting documents can viewed via the link below: [Local Plan 2021-2040 | Local Plan 2021-2040 | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk](#).

In addition to this we are continuing with the monitoring refresh mentioned in my last report and the majority of this should be published shortly. I'll provide an update on this and the interactive version of the Local Plan in my next report.

Turning attention to the future, as mentioned previously, we are awaiting confirmation of the new plan-making system from Government, anticipated Autumn. This will likely involve further legislation, policy, and guidance. Prior to this we are considering the likely direction of travel and what will be needed to start the process of a new local plan given that the timescales are likely to be reduce from 5 years to 30 months, that both devolution and local government reorganisation is gathering pace, and that the process for plan-making will be different.

Water Infrastructure Situation

Introduction

You will have most likely heard, seen, or read in the media recently about water companies. A topic that isn't often far from the headlines and this time relates to water companies blocking new development. It a serious issue that is facing the whole of England and one that has to be carefully balanced with not damaging the natural environment. The below covers the position of Anglian Water (AW), how this will impact the Borough geographically and in terms of housing delivery, how the Borough Council is engaged with the issue, covers what is known so far and potential direction of travel.

Anglian Water Position

AW have recently taken a new position relating to any new growth that isn't already committed. This includes all development that would require a connection to their water infrastructure. They are categorising all of their waste water catchments in one of four ways, and this is how they will be responding to planning applications (and future local plan / neighbourhood plan allocations):

1. It has capacity and is happy for growth to go ahead.
2. There is insufficient capacity, but investment is planned, so it recommends a planning condition preventing occupation until works are completed.

3. There is insufficient capacity and no work is planned, so recommends refusal.
4. In very small catchment areas, registers a standing objection to development proposals but offers applicants the chance to submit evidence to prove otherwise. This is in the form of 12 months of monitoring to determine if enough capacity exists.

Areas Impacted within the Borough

The main Water Recycling Centre (WRC) impacted by the second classification is the Burnham Market Water WRC. This covers multiple settlements including Brancaster, Brancaster Staithe, Burnham Deepdale, Burnham Norton, Burnham Market, Burnham Thorpe, North Creake, South Creake, and part of Titchwell. There is a number of further WRC's which fall into this classification and the following settlements are covered within this: Ashwicken, Middleton & Blackborough End, Syderstone, East & West Rudham. At these locations, AW will recommend a pre-occupation condition is attached to the planning permission, it is likely that this will be for 2030 when the works will have to be completed by. Should the works take place earlier, AW will inform the Borough Council.

There is one WRC impacted by the third stance – the Heacham WRC. This also covers multiple settlements including Heacham, Sedgeford, Docking, Snettisham, Hunstanton, Old Hunstanton, Holme next to Sea, Thornham, and part of Titchwell. At these locations AW will object to new planning applications. This is likely to mean that AW will upgrade the WRC in their next investment plan, so after 2030 with works schedule to complete by 2035. Again, if this happens sooner, AW will inform the Borough Council.

Position four relates to rural areas and covers ex-local authority relatively small estates or a collection of properties. These were likely not designed to facilitate additional capacity. However, AW do offer developers who may seek a connection to these the opportunity to demonstrate there is sufficient capacity.

This is a position a number of water companies across England are taking. This impacts significant areas of the Borough and is likely to lead to delays in new development in some areas and currently a probable blocker in others. Whilst AW are not a statutory consultee in the planning process, the Borough Council does and will be considering their advice when determining applications. This could lead in some cases to the refusal of planning permission, the need for a pre-occupation condition, further work from the developers being required, and in other areas that are not impacted, planning permission being granted.

Housing Delivery Now and The Next Local Plan

The real issue is the here and now, and the impact this will have on new development coming forward in these areas. Cumulatively, this will likely impact on housing delivery and therefore making it even more challenging to avoid the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', through the 5-year housing land supply and housing delivery tests. Engagement of the presumption broadly means that policies within our adopted local plan carry less or limited weight in the planning determination process, and it could mean development taking place in areas we normally wouldn't want to, at scales we may not want to see. This is what happened back in 2015 when the Borough Council had difficulties in being able to demonstrate a positive 5-year housing land supply position.

It seems unreasonable that a situation out of the Borough Council's control, and unlike nutrient neutrality, it is something not within our gift to be able to solve and yet the consequences of this in terms of housing delivery are likely to fall on the Borough Council. For the next local plan, this will likely mean any potential new site allocations in the impacted

areas have to be stepped in terms of delivery. This is based upon the current situation remaining in place.

The Position of the Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority

There is an issue here in terms of balancing the much needed economic and housing growth required to meet the local need, and any potential impact on the natural environment. AW are telling the Borough Council, as the Local Planning Authority, that their WRCs are at or are over capacity and granting further planning permissions that seek a connection, despite the legal right to connect, could lead to negative impacts on the natural environment. Without the evidence to show otherwise, granting such permissions is not a position the Borough Council would want to take. This means that **the Borough Council as the Local Planning Authority will likely be following the advice of Anglian Water at this time.**

Borough Council Engagement

Given this the Borough Council are engaging with AW, the Environmental Agency (EA), the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), as well as all the planning authorities in Norfolk (including County Council). There may be bespoke site solution, however the overall problem of a lack of investment in water infrastructure over a long period of time is not something within the gift of local planning authorities or developers to fix. Currently, the only solution would likely be further funding from Government to the water companies to upgrade their water infrastructure, but this isn't an option on the table, as far as the Borough Council is aware.

Contact Anglian Water

AW have asked that all queries on this subject from developers, parish councils and the public, etc. be directed to them. We would be grateful if you too can direct those with an interest to AW:

- Anglian Water website: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/developing/planning-capacity/>
- Anglian Water email: planningliasion@anglianwater.co.uk

Neighbourhood Planning Update

As of July 2025, there are 22 Neighbourhood Plans successfully “made” (adopted) by the Borough Council:

- Previous (2024-25) financial year – 3 Neighbourhood Plans passed at referendum and adopted
- Current (2025-26) financial year – 4 Neighbourhood Plans submitted and/ or currently under examination (Marshland St James; Syderstone; The Walpoles; Walpole Cross Keys); also anticipated to go to referendum by spring 2026
- Estimated referendum dates –
 - Marshland St James – late-September/ early-October 2025
 - Syderstone – November/ December 2025
 - The Walpoles – November/ December 2025
 - Walpole Cross Keys (Review) – March 2026

- Other plans anticipated for submission during 2025-26 financial year – Docking (likely to go to referendum during 2026-27 financial year)

Recently the Government announced withdrawal of up-front Locality funding to qualifying bodies (Town/ Parish Councils) towards the preparation of neighbourhood plans, as a result of the Government's [Spending Review 2025](#), funding for neighbourhood planning support services would no longer be available beyond the end of March 2025 (i.e. the end of the 2024-25 financial year). However, funding packages agreed with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) during the 2024-25 financial year would be available until March 2026. The statement can be viewed [here](#).

The Government followed this up with a Ministerial Statement ([25 June 2025](#)), confirming that Locality funding has been cut as part of the 2025 spending review, but funding for local authorities will remain to cover the costs of neighbourhood plan examinations and referendums.

The Borough Council will closely consider the impacts of Government funding for neighbourhood plans. It will be necessary to continue to support neighbourhood planning, in line with the legal duties (e.g. [Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017](#) and [Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012](#), as amended) and the [Corporate Strategy 2023-2027](#) priorities, to protect our environment and support our communities.

Licensing

- Legislation requires we review our Licensing Act Policy this year and have a new one in place by January 2026 – consultation in progress, ends August 31/08/2025 and will then go through E&C, Cabinet, Full Council.
- The Tobacco and Vapes Bill is still at committee stage in the House of Lords, and is said to require any premises selling tobacco, vapes and associated products to have a premises licence, and any person a personal licence. <https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3879> To be administered by Local Authorities and enforced by Trading Standards (may change?!). Will have a big impact on workload if it is implemented as per the bill. Currently working on establishing the number of premises within our area.
- We issued fixed penalty notices for breaches to licence conditions for one of our licensed dog breeders in mid-July and received payment of £7750.00 on 09/07/2025. A good result. We will now be varying their licence and issuing an improvement notice to ensure compliance moving forwards. Press release - [https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/news/article/1895/breaches cost licensed dog breeders nearly 80 00](https://www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/news/article/1895/breaches%20cost%20licensed%20dog%20breeders%20nearly%2080%2000)
- We are currently undertaking the first round of inspections at Gambling premises licensed within the borough – we will inspect twice each year. Premises includes - Adult Gaming Centres, Betting shops, Family Entertainment Centres, Bingo Premises and Gaming Machines in Pubs.
- 2 hearings being held on 23rd July. One at Licensing Committee – application for a new club premises certificate at Bircham Cricket Club, and the other before Licensing and Appeals Board for a licensed vehicle wishing to deviate from conditions re door signage. Bircham Cricket Club have now withdrawn their application.
- 2 x taxi driver's had their licences revoked by the Licensing & Appeal Board in June

Written response to question from Cllr Crofts June Full Council ref announced visits

Licensed Breeders are inspected on application, renewal and a mid-term point of the licence. These inspections are arranged with the licence holder in advance and charged for as part of the licence fee. We also carry out unannounced visits to premises when issues arise and allegations or complaints are raised.

There are operational reasons which mean unannounced visits are not the norm.

Guidance recommends unannounced visits as part of the star rating system for breeders. The main reason unannounced visits are not the standard course of action is due to there being a large number of breeders who conduct their activities at a private residence where we have no rights of access without first giving 24 hours notice, and even commercial premises may not be manned 24hrs a day. We can of course turn up and ask to visit in accordance with regulations but this would be wasteful of resources every time the breeders are not on the premises or if they were to refuse us access when at a private residence. In these circumstances officers would have spent time reviewing licences in advance and travelling to premises only to travel back again having accomplished nothing. This would obviously increase costs as well as wasting officer time and increasing workload. The officer would have to either try again at a later date on the off chance the licence holder may be in attendance and allow for the visit, or arrange an inspection in advance. Initial inspections on application also require a vet to be in attendance, this is payable by the applicant and has to be arranged in advance so is practical to complete on an unannounced basis.

Only the mid term visit is recommended in the guidance as unannounced. Both application and renewal will always be arranged visits. But, to reiterate, we do carry out unannounced visits to premises when issues arise and allegations or complaints are raised.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Council Meeting

COUNCILLOR CHRIS MORLEY - CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

For the period 26th June to 21st July 2025

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 24/25

The draft Statement has been published and our external auditors EY plan to commence their audit in September. We are now getting back on track with the latest Government guidelines following the COVID period. The Statement is published on the Borough Website.

24/25 REVENUE OUTTURN

The final position was not quite as favourable as I had previously anticipated. Nevertheless, with a net Borough spend of £25,658,577 we delivered a reduction against original budget of £272,373. This result still means we have to draw upon General Reserves to balance the annual account. However, with a contribution from the lump sum we put aside when paying up front (for 3 years) our portion of pension fund, we have £526,366 more than planned. We are taking this to hold in earmarked reserves, predominantly to cover costs for the new Local Plan.

SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE VARIANCES TO BUDGET

Most of these arose in the corporate arena and outside the control of service managers, In particular:

Audit fees for the 23/24 accounts rose to £457k from our estimate of £178k, due in the main to EY's fees and work allocations increasing. These rates are negotiated nationally on behalf of the Government by the PSAA and obviously higher than we expected. We do of course challenge the Auditor's claims and the Company did spend extensive periods checking our value for money performance and asset valuations. We did though receive a clean bill of health.

We have made a provision of £567k for bad debts, predominantly for planning receipts but there is a good chance we will release a large portion of this for 25/26.

We estimated that the cost of paying benefits would be neutral but the subsidy was £732k less than forecast, reflecting the difficulty of forecasting demand over this and the prior year-end. This will be reviewed to improve accounting estimations.

Although we beat our turnover savings target, we could have improved our position if we could have reduced our staff Agency bill of £745,778. Transformation should help reduce this but LGR may swamp identification of any improvements in this area of productivity improvement.

FINANCING ADJUSTMENT

With the recent agreement to invest in the renovation and enhancement of the Guildhall project, I am sure this line in the accounts is going to receive considerably more focus as it incorporates the cost of our investment decisions. For 24/25 we report a surplus of £244k resulting from receipts from the West Norfolk Housing Company, lower than forecast capital programme and returns from our investment programme.

EARMARKED RESERVES

We do not want to risk diverting money away from key service programmes, but we are having a further trawl of our earmarked reserves to ascertain the degree of risk in releasing (or, if thought appropriate, increasing) sums to support our Action Plan and in particular, our capital programme.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

We have a significant capital programme 25/26 to 28/29 of over £100m, this includes a rephasing of £10m from 24/25 when the capital outturn expenditure was £14m underspent against original budget. (Lower reforecast December 24). Our housing programme is now ahead of schedule, but the Towns Fund programme is significantly behind expectations. However, after all the design considerations that have been undertaken, work is expected to take off this year.

HOUSING PROGRAMME

House sales are slow at the moment and we are modelling options for our housing companies to change the tenure mix, particularly at Florence Fields. This includes looking at access to grant monies for shared ownership and rentals with our primary objective of increasing accessibility to housing for those in need. Discounts for key workers are also available.

IDB LEVY SUPPORT 25/26

We have been promised £499K from Government to support the Levy in 25/26 which is against a forecast cost of £3.7m from the IDB Boards. We included a figure of £150K in the budget, which provides £349k headroom. A meeting has been arranged for 2nd September in the Houses of Parliament to maintain our lobbying of MPs for an alternative funding mechanism.

RECENT GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS

FUNDING REFORM Comments ends 15/8.

The Government is committed to providing a multi-year funding settlement. This is not the best of timing for us as we wait for LGR submissions and a Government decision. We have yet to comment but it appears that the outcome will be less individual support grants and a focus on deprivation and

homelessness. Some good news for our budget is that funds from suppliers for managing their extended producer responsibilities (EPR) is outside of this consultation. More anon.

COUNCIL TAX SIMPLIFICATION consultation ends 12/9.

I understand the criteria for Disregards is under review and giving more time to pay and such like. We offer a 12 month payment plan but mass use will mean some software changes. We also, with our small portion of the tax take, offer around £1m support through CTSS, the total benefit to those who qualify, taking into account collection for County, Police etc is considerable. Again, watch this space.

PROCUREMENT

GUILDHALL PROJECT

Following the authorisation of the capital funds, the winning company has been notified that it is the preferred bidder. However, with public procurement, there is a mandatory standstill period which allows for unsuccessful bidders to challenge the decision. If there are no challenges the contract award will be made on 29th July. Then our contract/project management skills will be tested.

KINGS LYNN MASTER PLAN

Bids are in and evaluation is taking place. The Master Plan is essential for demonstrating our vision for West Norfolk and securing Government funding for its realisation.

THE CUSTOMS HOUSE

Refurbishment is coming to an agreed design and pre-market engagement to seek information from interested parties will shortly be published. This data, to help our understanding of the market and it's capabilities should help our procurement process and deliver an outcome commensurate with the history of the site.

CONTRACT MANAGEMENT

Is an important facet of ensuring projects complete on cost, time and specification is being rolled out across the Council.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.
<p>The Council's Transformation Plan includes a review of our IT and the penetration of AI to support and reduce administration costs. Detailed information on this programme will be released shortly. If there are no objections to our intentions for the Guildhall contract, work will begin in earnest after the may years of discussions, working groups and Panel consideration. Exciting time for the Council, the future of Kings Lynn, West Norfolk and East Anglia in general.</p>
3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled
<p>Various Portfolio Meetings.</p>

MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

21st July 2024

COUNCILLOR – JO RUST CABINET MEMBER FOR – PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

For the period 16th June 2025 – 21th July 2025

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters. –

I have continued to attend the Freebridge out and about days, where members of staff and the board go out and visit residents to ask their view on Freebridge as an organisation and if there are any outstanding repairs. I have attended in both the Walpoles and Hunstanton. Meeting our local residents and hearing directly of their experiences with one of our key housing providers is invaluable in getting to know more about the organisation. What cannot be disputed is the dedication and commitment of those who deliver the services within the organisation. Disappointingly the number of voids remains an issue. Freebridge have explained that despite taking on 20 more operatives they cannot keep up. They acknowledge that they have higher numbers than their peer organisations. 90% of their stock is from the old takeover and is over 60 years old. They're currently going through a reorganisation which should enable them to get the best out of their talented staff they have.

On 20th June I met with officers from Carer's Voice, an organisation which speaks on behalf of residents who are carers and are often overlooked or ignored. Our economy benefits to the tune of £182 billion a year because of the unpaid work carried out by carers. The all age carers identity passport has now been rolled out to 5000 carers across Norfolk. This passport means that the carer doesn't have to keep telling their story. It also aims to increase recognition of carers, offer support and provide a shortcut for carers to access services and benefits. Supporting carers is one of the ways that we keep people living independently at home for longer. The organisation have also produced a discharge booklet and an All Age Carers Handbook, both of which are designed to make the lives of carers slightly less challenging. It's worth knowing that a carer will spend 28 hours a month on the telephone just trying to get the services that they need.

Transport and access are an issue which is raised time and time again. If our residents can't access reliable, affordable and accessible public transport it limits their ability to function and contribute to society. So, to hear that the recent works to the bus station and railway station had a significantly negative impact on West Norfolk Community Transport was disappointing, forcing passenger numbers down. WNCT has a charitable arm and a commercial arm. Low passenger numbers impact on the financial viability of the organisation

which could have a knock-on impact on the organisations ability to deliver the charitable aims which enable people to continue to live independently for longer. Our council support the organisation with some funding, as does NCC to a certain extent. Organisations like WNCT are a valuable asset to our community and the service that they provide has a positive impact on the lives of our residents.

I was fortunate to attend Local Government Association conference in Liverpool at the start of July. It was an amazing event where I heard from council leaders, MPs, metro mayors and partner organisations. I heard how charities like Everton in the Community are making a positive difference to the lives of local residents. For every £1 invested by EitC they get a return of £30 through social value. They have people delivering health in the community to people who otherwise would be at risk of not accessing it because it's in a hospital setting. I hope that there might be scope for us to do some similar work, albeit on a smaller scale, with our local football club. I was able to ask Wes Streeting, Minister for Health, to tell Jim McMahon that a three unitary model would be best for our residents and mean that we can deliver on what's needed to succeed in the 10-year plan for health through the plans to move from hospital to the community, from analogue to digital and from treatment to prevention. Linking with our recent decision around the guildhall development, much was made of the wider determinants of health which include access to culture and the arts. I attended a really interesting APSE workshop where we heard more about procurement and insourcing and the make work pay agenda and I learnt more about the Public Interest Test, which helps us ask the rights questions at the right time. Social value was a phrase which was repeated at many of the workshops and meetings. Interestingly (to me at least), I learnt that Legal and General lend money to the government who then lend it to councils through the public works loan board. L&G were keen to stress the importance they place on this partnership work to benefit social need. There is too much for me to list, but if you have an area of interest and would like to know if I attended a workshop or session on it, please just ask. While at the conference I took part in judging a competition on climate champions in schools. It was amazing to see the excellent work undertaken by children in their schools and it was hard to decide which should be the overall winner as they had all worked so hard and so creatively.

At the monthly health and wellbeing partnership meeting we heard from Community Action Norfolk about the fragility of the VCSE sector. We have 4500 charities in Norfolk as well as 8000 smaller, unregistered charities. 71% said that their financial situation has worsened and 33% are using unplanned financial resources. VCSE service fill the gaps in provision from statutory services and are vital to our residents. They're also the partner organisations which will help us deliver on our Marmot work and the 10 year plan for health. Yet, they're seeing a 61% increase in the number of people they're supporting and a 45% increase in the level of complexity of the support needed. The short term funding issue is unclear but referrals from statutory services has increased. Poor public transport was referred to as were digital barriers and geographical isolation. LGR is impacting on the confidence of the VCSE sector. As portfolio holder for people and communities I understand the importance of

the VCSE sector on our ability to support our residents and deliver on our commitments. I will, of course, be keeping a close eye on the situation as I'm keen to see these services strengthened not weakened further.

On Thursday 10th July members of KLAC visited the fire station in North Lynn. We were given a tour and show the many tools and pieces of equipment that are used to deliver life saving actions. We also learnt that there are 42 fire stations in Norfolk and at any time, up to half of them could be unavailable due to staffing. Expenditure per head of population, is £34.90 compared to £41.80 in England, so a very efficient service.

On July 15th I attended an online session held by the LGA around LGR support. It was a very informative session and we heard that any services which aren't statutory will be devolved to town or parish councils. This makes the establishment of a King's Lynn town council even more important.

On 16th July I attended a Marmot stakeholder event in Downham Market and met with more key organisations who will be fundamental in supporting our authority to deliver on reducing health inequalities

The new MITEL omni-channel software has been implemented in CIC and everyone in the team are answering calls via softphones instead of handsets. Initially, some issues were experienced with two-way conversations from home, however, these have now been resolved by connecting through a VEN instead of the VPN. This means, there are now five CIC Advisors working from home and coming into the office one day per week. Laptops have been ordered for the team, with further CIC Advisors commencing home working when they have been built by ICT. In addition to the CIC Advisors, one of the CIC Supervisors, the CIC Operations and Training Lead and the team manager are also working from home one or two days per week.

Since the introduction of home working, the team dynamics has positively changed and five desks have been removed from the area. Those who are home working are now hot desking, and everyone is happy with this situation and team morale is much improved. The team are now working on phase two of the Customer Service Transformation (CST) programme, which is the implementation of MITEL webchat and the introduction of the 'Talkative' Virtual Agent. There is a proof of concept being BETA testing and this is initially focusing on waste enquiries.

In the background, there is investigation into the knowledge base for other service areas, so the plan is to GO LIVE with 3 to 5 services areas initially, as the CIC Advisors will be able to assist with the other service areas and continue to build on this. Once this is up and running (hopefully late Summer 2025), the Corporate Web team will then be looking at SMS and WhatsApp for the team. The third phase of the CST programme is the introduction of 'Talkative' VOICE to replace the IVR and to assist the CIC Advisors on the telephones. A business case for this will be written in August 2025.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

CoWA business breakfast
Age Friendly communities' discussion
Guildhall Briefing
Full Council
King's Lynn Community Conference
LGR stalls
KL JCP apprentice discussion
Norwich Pride
Royal Philharmonic concert
WNCT
Leisure facilities working group
QEH briefing

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Portfolio briefings – Health and Wellbeing
Portfolio Briefings – CIC
Portfolio Briefing - Housing
Full Council
Health and wellbeing partnership meetings (monthly)
E&C
Freebridge briefing
Joint Group Meetings
Cabinet/special cabinet/cabinet sifting/Cabinet Briefings
IDB meeting
Food for Thought
Homelessness and housing delivery briefing
ICB at NCC
KLAC
West Norfolk Community Transport meeting
Beacon Church Creating Communities event
Special council meeting
Health and Wellbeing Board event
Marmot stakeholder launch
Housing standards and ASB portfolio meeting
Leisure facilities meeting
LGR engagement events
Hunstanton sea defences

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Council Meeting

COUNCILLOR PAUL BLAND- CABINET MEMBER FOR OPEN SPACES AND CAR PARKING

For the period 17th June to 23rd July

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Summer Efforts in Full Bloom: Celebrating the Dedication of Our Open Spaces Team

This report has been deliberately dedicated to showcasing and celebrating the exceptional work carried out by the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk's Public Open Spaces (POS) Team. Behind every clean park, blooming flowerbed, and well-maintained green space is a team of hardworking professionals whose efforts often go unseen—but certainly not unappreciated.

Rising to the Challenge

Despite the unusually hot and dry weather this summer, our Open Spaces Team has gone above and beyond to meet the needs of the borough. Their unwavering commitment has ensured the continuity of essential day-to-day duties—whether it's grass cutting, litter picking, bin emptying, or general maintenance, our community spaces have remained clean, safe, and inviting thanks to their dedication and resilience.

Recruiting seasonal staff continues to be a vital component of our summer operations. However, finding the right team members in sufficient numbers can be a real challenge. Yet time and again, our existing workforce steps up, going the extra mile with an inspiring sense of duty and pride in their work. Their determination ensures that our standards never slip, even during periods of stretched capacity.

A Blooming Success

This summer, residents and visitors alike have been treated to vibrant, colourful bedding displays that brighten the borough. These stunning arrangements don't just appear overnight—they're the product of months of planning, planting, watering, and nurturing by our skilled and passionate team. Every petal tells a story of hard work and horticultural talent.

We are especially proud to be entering our open spaces into the Anglia in Bloom campaign this year. In preparation for the judging, the team has raised the bar even higher, delivering an exceptional standard of care and presentation across the borough. Their work has not only impressed judges but has drawn admiration from residents and visitors alike.

Excellence Recognised: Green Flag Success

Our commitment to excellence is perhaps best symbolised by the Five Green Flag Awards retained again this year. These prestigious awards are a national benchmark for parks and green spaces and reflect far more than aesthetic appeal. They recognise our commitment to safety, environmental sustainability, community engagement, and effective management. Every award is a testament to the behind-the-scenes efforts of the Parks and Gardens team, who work year-round to keep our spaces welcoming and well-maintained.

Spotlight on Special Events

The team's talent was also on full display at this year's Sandringham Flower Show, where our Central Grounds Team proudly contributed a stunning selection of floral displays. Their creativity and expertise brought a touch of brilliance to this high-profile event, once again highlighting the exceptional quality of our borough's green-fingered professionals.

And when it comes to large-scale public events, our POS team continues to be the quiet force behind the scenes. During Festival Too, one of the largest free music events in the country, the team carried out meticulous nightly clean-up operations. Thanks to their precise coordination and tireless work, the event space was returned to spotless condition each day—often before most people had woken up—ensuring a safe and pleasant environment for all attendees.

A Team Worth Celebrating

The work of the Borough Council's Open Spaces Team is not just seasonal—it is essential, year-round, and carried out with extraordinary pride, professionalism, and community spirit. Whether creating spaces of beauty, ensuring public safety, or representing our borough on regional and national stages, the team continues to embody the highest standards of service.

To every member of the team—thank you. Your efforts make a lasting impact on the lives of residents and the reputation of our borough. This summer has once again shown that our open spaces are in the very best of hands.'

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled
23 rd June – Cabinet Briefing 26 th June – Full Council 7 th July – Special Cabinet – Guildhall 17 th July – Special Council – Guildhall 17 th July – Special Council- Honorary Alderman 21 st July – Cabinet Attended the Green Flag Awards with the Gardening Teams Portfolio Meeting with Assistant Director and Senior Staff Attended Arm Forces Flag Raising in Tower Gardens

REPORT TO COUNCIL

31st July 2025

COUNCILLOR ...SIMON RING - CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS

For the period mid-June to 23rd July

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

AWN

1. Introduction

This report provides a detailed update on recent and forthcoming developments relating to leisure, sport, and community engagement within the borough. It consolidates activity from Alive West Norfolk, the Playing Pitch Strategy (June 2025), and major events contributing to cultural, social, and economic objectives.

2. Corn Exchange and Cultural Programme

Corn Exchange Cinema experienced a +19.8% rise in admissions in June 2025, its best June since 2022. This aligns with national growth in cinema attendance. Contributing titles included the live-action versions of 'How to Train Your Dragon' and 'Lilo & Stitch', as well as the 'F1 Movie'.

Community-focused events such as Silver Screenings, Toddler Tuesdays, and Rotary Club screenings remain highly popular. Each includes complimentary refreshments and serves family and senior audiences.

The theatre hosted five awards events in June, including the COWA Student Awards and football club evenings. July will feature sold-out King's Lynn Festival events, including the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Jools Holland.

3. Major Sporting Events and Participation

The Hunstanton Open Bowls Tournament in July welcomed 150 competitors from across the UK. This aligns with our objectives to support sports tourism and reinforce Hunstanton's role as a destination for national events.

4. Sports Facilities Strategy – 2040 Vision

The West Norfolk Playing Pitch Strategy (June 2025) outlines facility requirements based on housing and population growth. Projected demand by

2040 includes:

- A new 25m, 6-lane swimming pool
- Refurbishment or replacement of St James' and Oasis Pools
- A new 4-court sports hall in the northern borough
- A new 159-station gym (public or private sector delivery)
- Expansion of gymnastics facilities
- Feasibility for indoor tennis and netball-specific courts
- Rationalisation of indoor bowls
- New 3G football pitches, non-turf cricket wickets, and Padel courts

5. Facility Development and Partnerships

a. King's Lynn Town FC Partnership:

- First Team and U23 squads return to Lynnsport for training
- Alive Community to lead on outreach and development
- Alive branding to appear on kits and sponsor materials

b. Padel Court Development:

- EOI issued for Hunstanton with private operator delivery
- Council-led development planned for Lynnsport site

c. Digital Leisure Transformation:

- A new leisure website is in final stages of testing
- Broader digital enhancements planned for booking and access systems

6. Community Engagement and Health Inclusion

- Gymnastics enrolment remains above 1,000 with rising income
- Alive's Active Families Programme received national recognition under Sport England's Patchwork scheme
- Play Street pop-up events have launched in North Lynn and South Lynn, repurposing roads for community use
- Alive is supporting Marmot Group work in Hunstanton and Downham, aligned with public health objectives

7. Conclusion

Alive West Norfolk and strategic partners continue to deliver strong outcomes in participation, infrastructure planning, and community impact. The Council is well-positioned to meet future needs with a clear, evidence-based strategy and effective delivery partnerships.

7. Commercial Performance and Membership Growth

Alive West Norfolk has continued to deliver exceptional commercial performance in membership-based income. Following a £100,000 uplift in Direct Debit (DD) income against budget last year, current year-to-date figures show we are exceeding monthly membership DD targets once again.

Over the past 2–3 years, the membership DD revenue line has increased by approximately £500,000. This success has been fuelled by new facility openings and by capitalising on shifts in the local market, including a major competitor doubling the size of their facility.

Our strategic focus has been on price optimisation—maintaining a strong membership yield and resisting the pull toward budget pricing models. Additionally, there has been a significant internal culture shift: 65% of total membership sales are now delivered by the wider operational team outside of dedicated sales roles. This pivot has reinforced a commercial mindset across the organisation and supports long-term sustainability and reinvestment in services.

Business and Property Services

- Rural Business Connect events in Downham Market and Hunstanton were well attended by local businesses. New applicants have come forward for the West Norfolk Rural Business Grant from these events. The event details were widely communicated, and businesses attended that have not previously engaged with council business events.
- The West Norfolk Rural Business Grant scheme continues. One business has already been awarded a grant, many others are in the pipeline with their applications.
- Organising visits for National Manufacturing day (25th September) which includes tours and a careers talk with four key businesses in King's Lynn involved. Students will be attending from colleges in West Norfolk and the UEA.
- A Meet the Buyer event is being planned for October.

I have had a number of meetings with local businesses who are keen to be involved in planning for the masterplans for both Kings Lynn and Hunstanton.

Overview and Progress

Significant progress was made in weeks 13 and 14 across key workstreams, notably within outsourcing, disposals, and preparatory activity for the capital receipts programme.

We are pleased to announce that David Gent has joined the team as Interim Disposals Surveyor. David brings a wealth of experience, including previous roles managing property disposals for rail and local authority portfolios, and more recently advising councils in the Southeast and an NHS Trust. He will focus on managing the full lifecycle of property disposals to support our capital receipts targets and optimise the property portfolio.

Key Activities

- Held strategic engagement with stakeholders at a local innovation hub to develop property-related initiatives.
- Submitted delegated authority documentation for a key leisure site project, currently awaiting financial approval.
- Engaged with potential and existing landowners at prominent sites to

progress strategic property interests.

- Completed procurement documentation to appoint agents for the disposal and letting of 17 vacant properties and a business park site.
- Initiated a new project to extend car park facilities at a social club site.
- Mobilised external surveyors to progress overdue rent reviews and lease renewals, with a
- forecast increase of £200,000+ in rental income.

Tourism Department Update

Reporting Period: 16 June – 22 July 2025

1. Partnership Working

The Tourism Department's HANSA20 umbrella programme continues to deliver Hanseatic and maritime-themed cultural activity for 2025. Following a successful call for artists in May, a digital projection project is now underway. The commissioned artist organisation visited King's Lynn in late June and was given a guided tour by the Senior Tourism Officer, including a historical overview and visits to all three existing projection sites.

The department continues to support the artist team as they develop community engagement workshops across the summer.

In addition, with the Senior Tourism Officer now appointed as the Hanse Commissioner for England, active contact has resumed with other English Hanse towns. A series of one-to-one exchange visits are scheduled to foster future collaborative cultural projects, both within England and across the wider Northern European Hanseatic network.

The department is also supporting preparations for the Downham Market Heritage Open Day in September. Production of the King's Lynn Heritage Open Day booklet is nearing completion and will soon move into the print stage ahead of the September launch.

2. Other Projects

Following its soft launch in June 2025, the department is actively promoting the new West Norfolk Tourism Ambassadors Course (available at tourismcourse.co.uk). Targeting local young people aged 16–24, the campaign includes:

- A radio advert campaign (early June to late July)
- A two-page advertorial in the July–August edition of KL Magazine (also targeting parents, older volunteers, and retirees)

- Planned video content and social media promotions scheduled for late July through August, timed to reach school leavers seeking seasonal work in tourism and hospitality

The course also includes a tailored version for adults aged 24+, supporting a broader pool of local tourism ambassadors.

3. Autumn Programming

The department has arranged a series of events in Hunstanton, King's Lynn, and Wells-next-the-Sea to support the autumn launch of the new Norfolk Coast: Myths & Legends booklet. This campaign promotes distinctive, out-of-season visitor experiences along the West and North Norfolk coast, aiming to extend the tourism season and support local businesses beyond the summer peak.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

31st July 2025

COUNCILLOR ALISTAIR BEALES – LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

For the period from 26-06-25 to 31-07-25

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

It being now over a year since I was elected Leader of the Council, I thought I might reflect on the role as I see it. The three other councillors in our midst who are former leaders, will be well aware of the demands of the role in terms of time and responsibility. However, the dreadful COVID period aside, local government reorganisation (LGR) probably places the most extraordinary demands on council leaders since 1974. The normal day-to-day demands of the role remain, and under the strong leader model operated by this council (as defined by the Local Government Act 2000), the demands and responsibilities of the leader are at the centre of how the council operates. In that technical respect, time and resource demands of LGR are sometimes unwelcome as it is more difficult to be involved and familiar with all the decisions that are taken. Nevertheless, that can be accommodated. What is less easy to accommodate is the reduced time available to spend with elected members and officers of this council. I attach great importance to that and try to be as open and accessible as possible, and it doesn't sit well not to be able to focus on it as I would like. But LGR is the biggest thing on the agenda for 50 years and has to be a priority.

It seems like a very long while since I last reported to full council, in fact I did report to 26th of June Council but was unable to attend. As I reported, that was due to the Future Norfolk presentation at the Royal Norfolk Show. (Future Norfolk is the branding for the six district councils that have come together to present the 3 unitary option). The presentation was the launch event for Future Norfolk, the 3 unitary proposal and associated survey, and it went extremely well. As well as me doing the presentation, our Borough Council events team managed all the logistics and put the event together. Other Borough council officers also attended to field questions and meet and greet. I was extremely proud of our team who in the opinion of all the gathered leaders did an excellent job.

Progress on the three unitary solution continues to be very good, and excellent work is being done with our consultants and leaders of other councils. I will update in detail as soon as I am able but for the moment it remains a work in progress. A very enlightening and satisfying work in

progress that focuses on the positives and what we can do better for our community. By contrast, we have seen some frankly reprehensible social media posts from Norfolk County Council talking about how a West unitary will go bankrupt from day one. We have seen the questionable judgement of what senior NCC figures see fit to post on social media, and you would hope and think they may have learned something. Not a bit it seems.

The geography and finances they talk about, as a matter of fact, are actually no more than their own guesses and projections of what the districts may do. I don't recognise what they say and it certainly doesn't accord with the work being done by Future Norfolk. We've now seen the social media posts compounded by a lengthy opinion piece in a local paper. Again it is asserted that the West will go bust and I think those writing such things, really ought to think about the impact it has on staff and residents. A guessing game as to the intentions of others and then boldly stating assertions as facts is not the way this debate should be conducted.

In fact this negative approach attacking alternative models sits badly at odds with the welcome constructive approach taken by other senior NCC members and officers. The joint working between NCC and the Borough Council on the ferry would be a prime example of this and I for one would like to see more and will continue to encourage that approach.

Despite that, it seems that some senior figures at NCC are determined to pursue their own Project Fear. We all know how that turned out.

Turning to devolution, the Government have confirmed that mayoral authorities will be set up and mayoral elections will proceed next May. In my view, that means it is certain that delayed County Council elections will go ahead, and so they should. This council almost unanimously supported a motion against the delay of County Council elections, and with unitaries not starting until May 2028, there is no case for further delay.

Returning to the subject of the Mayor, this is an absolutely key role for our own county of Norfolk and our neighbours in Suffolk. Frankly I have no care for the political stripe of the Mayor as long as they are competent, conscientious and energetic in pursuing the best for our Norfolk and Suffolk community. Nothing less will suffice. Good luck to those who want to take on this huge role.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

I will continue to attend as many meetings as I can related to LGR and devolution and recently attended the Local Government Association along with colleagues from this council, and a Local Government Information Unit event in Westminster at which Minister McMahon spoke.

Having long been a sceptic of “networking”, I’ve been proven wrong and these meetings are of immense value; just being in the room hearing first hand from the decision makers and other colleagues is invaluable. This council will continue to play a full role in devolution and LGR.

To prepare this Council for consideration of the LGR business case for the 3 unitary option, I have asked officers to organise scrutiny training and meetings with an experienced council leader from another authority (via the LGA) who has been through the unitary process. The timetable for this and scrutiny meetings and Cabinet (at which SO34 questions will be taken) and Council will soon be published so that members are aware of the dates and can prepare diaries accordingly.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

27 June

- Norfolk Leaders Meeting
- Area Group LGR meeting

30 June

- Norfolk District Leaders – LGR
- Guildhall Meeting

01 – 03 July

- LGA Conference

04 July

- Tour of Guildhall

07 July

- Cabinet Briefing
- Norfolk District Leaders – LGR
- LGR – District Leaders and Chief Execs
- Special Cabinet

08 July

- Future Norfolk Roadshow
- Labour Leaders Briefing
- Leader/Chief Executive Briefing

09 July

- Reform Leaders Meeting
- Meeting with Chairs and Group Leaders

11 July

- West Norfolk Transport
- BC/Freebridge Community Housing Liaison Meeting

14 July

- Leaders Session with ICC – LGR

15 July

- Conservative Group Leaders
- Officer LGR Meeting
- Exhibition Viewing
- Greyfriars Introduction

- Pre Council Briefing
- Civics re RAF Marham

16 July

- APPG on Local Government Reception – House of Commons

17 July

- Norfolk/Suffolk Leaders Meeting
- Special Council

18 July

- Purfleet Trust
- Monitoring Officer Meeting

21 July

- Norfolk Leaders Learning – Housing
- Norfolk District Leaders – LGR
- LGR – District Leaders and Chief Execs
- Cabinet
- Officers re LGR
- CWA/BC Strategic Liaison
- Planning Officers
- West Area Board – LGR – Inner Circle (TEAMS)

23 July

- Future West Norfolk Roadshow -Sandringham Flower Show

24 July

- LGR Peer Briefing
- Norfolk LGR Leaders
- Leader/Chief Exec briefing
- Norfolk Leaders Learning Session
- Cabinet

25 July

- LGR Stakeholder Breakfast
- District Meeting with Suffolk

28 July

- Norfolk District Leaders
- LGR District Leaders

29 July

- Civic Society Meeting
- Pre Council Briefing
- Major Housing Meeting
- Scrutiny Meeting

30 July

- Visit St Germans Pumping Station
- District Devolution
- Cabinet Briefing

31 July

- Norfolk Business Board
- Joint Norfolk & Suffolk Leader / CEX Devo Meeting
- Full Council