

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



COUNCIL MEETING

Agenda

Thursday, 26th March, 2026
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

18th March 2026

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, 26th March, 2026** 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 (Pages 5 - 16)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 26th February 2026.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Page 17)

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

5. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive Mayor's communications and announcements.

6. URGENT BUSINESS

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

7. PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS

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

8. 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 - 3rd March 2026** (Page 18)

CAB14: Adoption of the Property Disposal Policy

[Please click here to view a copy of the Cabinet Report relating to this item](#)

2) **Recommendations from the Electoral Arrangements Committee - 12th March 2026 - Hilgay Community Governance Review - Next Steps** (Pages 19 - 20)

[Click here to view the Electoral Arrangements Committee Report – Hilgay Community Governance Review](#)

9. REQUEST FOR EXTENSION TO THE SIX MONTH RULE - COUNCILLOR TYLER (Pages 21 - 22)

10. REPORT FROM THE MONITORING OFFICER - CONSTITUTION REVIEW (Pages 23 - 33)

11. ANNUAL REPORT FROM CHAIR OF THE CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL (Pages 34 - 36)

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

To consider the following Notices of Motion:

(4/26) Submitted by Councillor Kemp (rolled over from Full Council on 29th January 2026)

Motion - No to Council Sale of the Freehold of Hardwick Bridge Residential Park Homes for Over 55's

This Council has put the freehold of Hardwick Bridge Residential Park Homes on a list for sale on the open market, without consulting residents, or local councillors, or advising residents of the risks.

Hardwick Bridge Mobile Park Homes in South Lynn are the forever homes of retired residents. All residents must be over 55. The Government Leasehold Advisory Service has advised, the sell-off would diminish homeowners' security of tenure. Therefore this Council resolves not to sell, or otherwise

dispose of, the freehold of the Hardwick Bridge Residential Homes Estate.

13. CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS (Pages 37 - 87)

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

Finance – Councillor C Morley

People and Communities – Councillor J Rust

Deputy Leader and Business – Cllr S Ring

Leader - Councillor A Beales

14. 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

BOROUGH COUNCIL OF KING'S LYNN & WEST NORFOLK

COUNCIL

Minutes from the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 26th February, 2026 at 5.00 pm in the Assembly Room, Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn PE30 5DQ

PRESENT: Councillor A Bullen (Chair)

Councillors B Ayres, T Barclay, A Beales, S Bearshaw, J Bhondi, P Bland, R Blunt, A Bubb, R Coates, Mrs J Collingham, S Collop, R Colwell, C J Crofts, S Dark, M de Whalley, P Devulapalli, A Dickinson, S Everett, J Fry, D Heneghan, P Hodson, H Humphrey, B Jones, C Joyce, A Kemp, J Kirk, P Kunes, A Lawrence, S Lintern, B Long, J Lowe, A Moore, J Moriarty, C Morley, S Nash, J Osborne, T Parish, S Ring, C Rose, J Rust, A Ryves, S Sandell, D Sayers, Mrs V Spikings, S Squire, M Storey and A Ware

C:97 PRAYERS

Prayers were led by Father Adrian Ling.

C:98 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Anota, Bone, Jamieson, Ratcliffe, Tyler and de Winton.

C:99 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

C:100 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

C:101 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

C:102 PUBLIC QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUDGET

There were no Public Questions relating to the Budget.

C:103 THE BUDGET, FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION

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

Councillor Morley proposed the Budget, Financial Strategy and Council Tax Resolution and spoke in support, detailing the impact of the government settlements, efficiency targets, funding allocations and

contribution to reserves. Councillor Morley outlined the budget's composition and outlined a new community project fund which had been introduced allowing Councillors to apply for one off projects.

Councillor Beales seconded the Budget, Financial Strategy and Council Tax Resolution and reserved his right to speak.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, the Leaders of each Opposition Group were invited to speak on the Budget.

Councillor Blunt stated that he was pleased to see a balanced budget and was pleased in the way that Members had been involved early on in the process with a plethora of briefings and updates and thanked officers for engaging Members. However, he was concerned that, since the Budget had been subject to scrutiny, new information had been received and the budget had been amended and Members had not had the chance to scrutinise the new figures in detail.

Councillor Heneghan thanked officers and indicated that she would be supporting the budget as it was a requirement to have a balanced budget, however she had issues with the process carried out. She referred to the Labour Government funding reforms and the work of the previous Government. She commented that the revised settlement from Government was about fairness.

Councillor Heneghan commented that the budget could be more ambitious and money diverted to where it was needed to help residents. Councillor Heneghan informed Council that the Labour Group had submitted amendments to the budget, however these had been rejected by the Administration and were based on the provisional budget, not the amended version that Councillors were now being asked to agree.

Councillor Heneghan referred to the additional funding which was available through the revised Government settlement and was pleased to see the addition of the Community Project Scheme which would be available to Members, and stated that the Labour Group had proposals which they would put forward.

Going forward, Councillor Heneghan requested that budget papers be made easier to understand and important figures highlighted rather than buried in the body of the report.

Councillor Heneghan also requested that the Council revisit the Council Procedure Rules relating to the submission of budget amendments as she felt the rules were currently restrictive.

Councillor Kirk commented that the lack of Scrutiny on the budget was worrying but he was happy with what was being presented. He stated that Reform UK would like to see more support available for

businesses and to support tourism and to consider assistance to individual wards.

Councillor Kemp stated that it was a credit to officers that a balanced budget had been produced. She referred to the Council Tax increase being at the maximum level during a cost of living crisis and that the Fair Funding Review did not consider rural areas. Councillor Kemp was concerned that Local Government Reorganisation would also come at a significant cost to the organisation. Councillor Kemp welcomed the introduction of the Community Projects Fund, to sit alongside the Councillors Community Grants Scheme.

Councillor Kemp also raised concerns regarding the Council Procedure Rules relating to budget amendments and the ability to scrutinise the revised figures.

The Mayor then opened up the debate to Members.

Councillor Long thanked officers for their work on this. He stated that Government figures had materially changed since the budget had been subject to scrutiny and the Council Procedure Rules did not allow for amendments to be submitted late on in the process. He stated he was not unhappy with the budget, but was not happy with the procedure. He commented that he could request that Standing Orders be suspended so that amendments could be submitted.

Councillor Long referred to the Community Project Fund and that he would use this money differently by not increasing fees and charges, council tax and car parking charges. He felt that the increase in car parking charges would impact town centres.

Councillor Long stated that he could not support the budget as he did not have the ability to submit amendments.

Councillor Dark thanked the officers and Portfolio Holders and commented that production of the budget was a lengthy process. He was disappointed that there was not the opportunity to scrutinise the revised budget following the Government Settlement and that the Government should have engaged and confirmed figures earlier on in the process.

Councillor Dark requested that going forward a cross-party Group be formed to discuss the use of the additional Government Settlement monies received.

Councillor Osborne thanked officers and the Portfolio Holder and appreciated that the Government Settlement had not been confirmed until late on in the process and was too late for amendments to be put forward. Councillor Osborne was pleased to see the introduction of the Community Projects Fund and looked forward to seeing the benefits it would bring. Councillor Osborne agreed that a cross-party group to

monitor the Medium Term Financial Strategy would be beneficial to ensure transparency.

Councillor Osborne referred to the procedure for submitting amendments and reminded Council that they had agreed to introduce this and acknowledged the reasons why this had been introduced, however he agreed that the process required a review.

Councillor Joyce commented that the Council was not compliant by not accepting amendments and made comments relating to the legality and processes involved in the budget setting.

The Monitoring Officer provided a point of clarification relating to the legality of the budget and reminded Members that the Monitoring Officer only had authority to make administrative changes to the Constitution. She explained that the administration had submitted this budget to Full Council and Cabinet had considered the budget using the information available to them at the time. She informed Members that the budget presented today was legal and could be decided upon.

Councillor de Whalley acknowledged the huge amount of work involved in producing the budget during challenging circumstances and reminded Councillors that fees and charges needed to cover costs and reserves were vital.

Councillor Ring reminded Council that they had considered and agreed to the Council Procedure Rules and the process for submitting amendments to the budget. He commented that the budget being presented was not an amended version from that submitted to Cabinet, there was just more money available following the confirmation of the Government Settlement. Councillor Ring commented that the budget was sensible and prudent which took the Council through the last couple of years of existence. He referred to the Community Projects Fund and that this would be available to all Councillors.

Councillor Everett referred to the statutory duty to present a balanced budget and raised concern relating to the process for amendments and the changes that had come forward so late.

Councillor Devulapalli thanked all those involved in producing the budget papers and was concerned with the lack of response from Central Government.

Councillor Beales addressed Council and referred them to the briefing sessions which had been available to all Councillors, and the papers that had been circulated. He welcomed the Community Project Fund and stated that Terms of Reference and criteria for this would be produced. Councillor Beales thanked officers and the Portfolio Holder for their work.

Councillor Beales welcomed cross-party input on monitoring the Medium Term Financial Strategy and stated he was happy if a review of the Council Procedure Rules took place via the Constitution Informal Working Group.

Councillor Beales urged Councillors to support the budget as presented.

In summing up, Councillor Morley referred to the good relationship the Council had with the MP's, the grants that the Council gave to good causes and the Community Projects Fund. Councillor Morley asked Members to approve the budget.

In accordance with Statutory Instrument 2014 No. 165, Local Government, England, The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, any decision taken on the Council's Budget or Council Tax setting must be taken with a recorded vote.

The recommendations included within the Agenda were put to a recorded vote, the result of which is set out below.

FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
	Ayres	
Barclay		
Beales		
Bearshaw		
Bhondi		
Bland		
Blunt		
Bubb		
Bullen		
Coates		
Collingham		
Collop		
Colwell		
Crofts		
		Dark
Devulapalli		
Dickinson		
		Everett
		Fry
Heneghan		
		Hodson
Humphrey		
Jones		
	Joyce	
		Kemp
		Kirk
Kunes		

Lawrence		
Lintern		
	Long	
Lowe		
		Moore
Moriarty		
Morley		
		Nash
Osborne		
Parish		
		Pidcock
Ring		
Rose		
Rust		
Ryves		
Sandell		
Sayers		
Spikings		
Squire		
Storey		
Ware		
De Whalley		
37	3	9

RESOLVED: Council approved the recommendations as set out below:

1) Approve the Policy on Earmarked Reserves and General Fund Balance and the maximum balances set for the reserves as detailed in Appendix 8 of “The Financial Strategy 2025/2030” as reported to Cabinet on 3 February 2026.

2) To delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to approve the contract for the appointment of a strategic partner to implement Local Government Reorganisation.

3) Approve the revision to the Budget for 2025/2026 (as set out in Appendix 1 of this report).

4) Approve the Fees and Charges for 2026/2027 as detailed in Appendix 4a of “The Financial Strategy 2025/2030” and approves the amended Fees and Charges Policy in Appendix 4b, as reported to Cabinet on 3 February 2026.

5) Approve the Pay Policy as detailed in Appendix 5 of “The Financial Strategy 2025/2030” as reported to Cabinet on 3 February 2026.

6) Approve a minimum requirement of the General Fund balance for 2026/2027 of £1,382,750.

7) Approve the budget of £28,845,006 for 2026/2027 and note the projections for 2027/2028, 2028/2029 and 2029/2030 (as set out in Appendix 1 of this report).

8) Pursuant to Section 25 of the Local Government Act, Council is asked to have due regard to this statement at Section 9 of this report when considering and approving the budget and the level of council tax for 2026/2027.

9) The Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 contain rules for the calculation of the Council Tax Base, which is an amount required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to be used in the calculation of the tax by the Council as the billing authority, and Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner as major precepting authorities, and in the calculation of the precept payable by the Council to the County Council and Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner. Under Officer Delegated Decision the Council Tax Base was calculated as follows for the year 2026/2027:

<p>Number of dwellings in each Council Tax band; taking into account the discounts, exemptions, premiums, rate of collection and Council Tax Support.</p>
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(a) 57,305 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as its Council Tax Base for the year.

<p>The tax base for each Parish</p>
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(b) the amounts listed in Appendix 3 Parish Taxbases & Precepts, (Column headed - Taxbase) being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as the amount of its Council Taxbase for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

10) Approve that the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2026/2027 in accordance with Sections 31A to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by S74 of the Localism Act 2011):

<p>Total expenditure</p>

(a) £116,592,221 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out

in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act. (See Appendix 2 of this report).

Total income

- (b) £102,726,822 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act. (See Appendix 2 of this report).

The difference between expenditure and income
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- (c) £13,865,399 being the amount by which the aggregate at 10(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 10(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its total budget for the year. (See Appendix 2 of this report).

Average Council Tax for Band D property (Borough and Parish)

- (d) £241.96 being the amount at 10(c) above divided by the amount at 10(a) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

The total of Parish Precepts and Special Expenses
--

- (e) £4,843,313 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.

The Borough Council's Council Tax for a Band D property (excluding Parish Precepts and Special Expenses)

- (f)(1) £157.44 being the amount at 10(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 10(e) above by the amount at 9(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.

The Borough Council's Council Tax for each valuation band
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- (f)(2)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
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£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
104.96	122.45	139.95	157.44	192.43	227.41	262.40	314.88

The Borough, Special Expenses and Parish Councils' Council Tax for a Band D property in each Parish

(g) the amounts listed in Col (4), Appendix 4 Special Expenses and Appendix 3 Parish Precepts, when added to the amount at 10 (f)(1) above being the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned divided in each case by the taxbases in Appendix 3 calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, gives the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwelling in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

The Borough and Parish Councils' Council Tax for each tax band in each Parish

(h) the amounts listed in Cols (1) to (8), Appendix 4 Special Expenses and Appendix 5 Parish Precepts, together with the amounts shown above in 10(f)(2) as valuation bands A to H - being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 10(g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36 of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

11) Note that for the year 2026/2027 Norfolk County Council and the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

Valuation Band	Norfolk County Council	Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner	Charge Relation in to Band D
A	£1,228.92	£229.86	6/9ths
B	£1,433.74	£268.17	7/9ths
C	£1,638.56	£306.48	8/9ths
D	£1,843.38	£344.79	9/9ths

E	£2,253.02	£421.41	11/9ths
F	£2,662.66	£498.03	13/9ths
G	£3,072.30	£574.65	15/9ths
H	£3,686.76	£689.58	18/9ths

The total Council Tax for each band in each parish (Appendix 6)
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- 12) Approve that, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 10h and 11 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets these as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2026/2027 for each of the categories of dwellings shown.
- 13) Approve that the Deputy Chief Executive (S151 Officer), Assistant Director Finance (Deputy S151 Officer), Revenues and Benefits Manager, Revenues Manager, Assistant Revenues Manager, Revenues Team Leaders, Committal Manager, Committal Officer, Non-Domestic Rates Officer, Generic Revenues and Benefits Officers, Revenues Officers and Revenues Assistants be authorised to demand and recover, in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council Tax set by this resolution, the Non Domestic Rates payable by Ratepayers and the annual Business Improvement District Levy, and be authorised to appear on behalf of the Council in Magistrates' Courts in respect of recovery proceedings.
- 14) Approve that the Officers be authorised to give notice of the setting of the Council Tax in accordance with Section 96 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

C:104 **RECOMMENDATIONS FROM CABINET ON 3 FEBRUARY 2026 ON BUDGET ASSOCIATED MATTERS**

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

Councillor Morley, seconded by Councillor Beales proposed the following Cabinet recommendations be taken en bloc and this was agreed:

- CAB121: Capital Programme and Resources
 CAB122: Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2026/2027
 CAB123: Capital Strategy 2026/2027

Councillor Morley presented the Capital Strategy, Capital Programme and Treasury Management Policies highlighting the statutory requirements, project tiers, funding sources and debt management. He explained that the Capital Strategy was a high-level document which linked the corporate strategy, capital expenditure and treasury management. Councillor Morley provided detail of the long-term loan arrangements and work ongoing to manage these arrangements.

Councillor Beales, in seconding the recommendations, reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Long spoke in support of the reports as presented, noting that these had not changed since they had been subject to scrutiny.

Councillor Blunt commented that he would be supporting the recommendations.

Councillor Heneghan commented that she would be supporting the recommendations.

Councillor Joyce commented that money had been found to support the Capital Programme during these difficult times and made reference to losses that the Council was facing in housing delivery.

Councillor Beales called for a point of order on the comment made by Councillor Joyce in that it was not accurate.

Councillor Dark echoed the comments made by Councillor Long and indicated he would be supporting the recommendations as they had been subjected to scrutiny.

Councillor Dark called for a point of order in that points of order should only be used in relation to clarification on the Constitution.

Councillor Moriarty called a point of order in that speeches should be relevant to the current item being considered.

Councillor Kemp indicated her support for the recommendations, however raised concern that the Ferry was not included.

Councillor Beales referred to Council Procedure rule 15.1 in that a point of personal explanation could be used to remedy misunderstandings and felt his interjection was reasonable.

Councillor Beales commented that in relation to the Capital Programme and Major Housing Scheme it was important that facts were accurate. He acknowledged that there was a projected loss on Florence Fields.

Councillor Morley, in summing up referred to the non-financial benefits of the Major Housing Schemes, including social value and other benefits to residents.

RESOLVED: The budget related recommendations from Cabinet held on 3 February 2026 were agreed by Full Council as set out below:

CAB121: Capital Programme and Resources

- 1) Cabinet recommends to Council the amendments to capital schemes and resources for the 2025-2030 capital programme as detailed in the report. 2
- 2) Cabinet recommends to Council that new capital bids as set out in appendix 3 and the exempt report, are approved to be included in the capital programme 2025-2030 as detailed.

CAB122: Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy 2026/2027.

Cabinet is asked to recommend that Council approve:

- The Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2026/2027, including treasury indicators for 2025-2030.
- The Minimum Revenue Provision Policy 2026/2027
- The Investment Strategy 2026/2027

CAB123: Capital Strategy 2026/2027

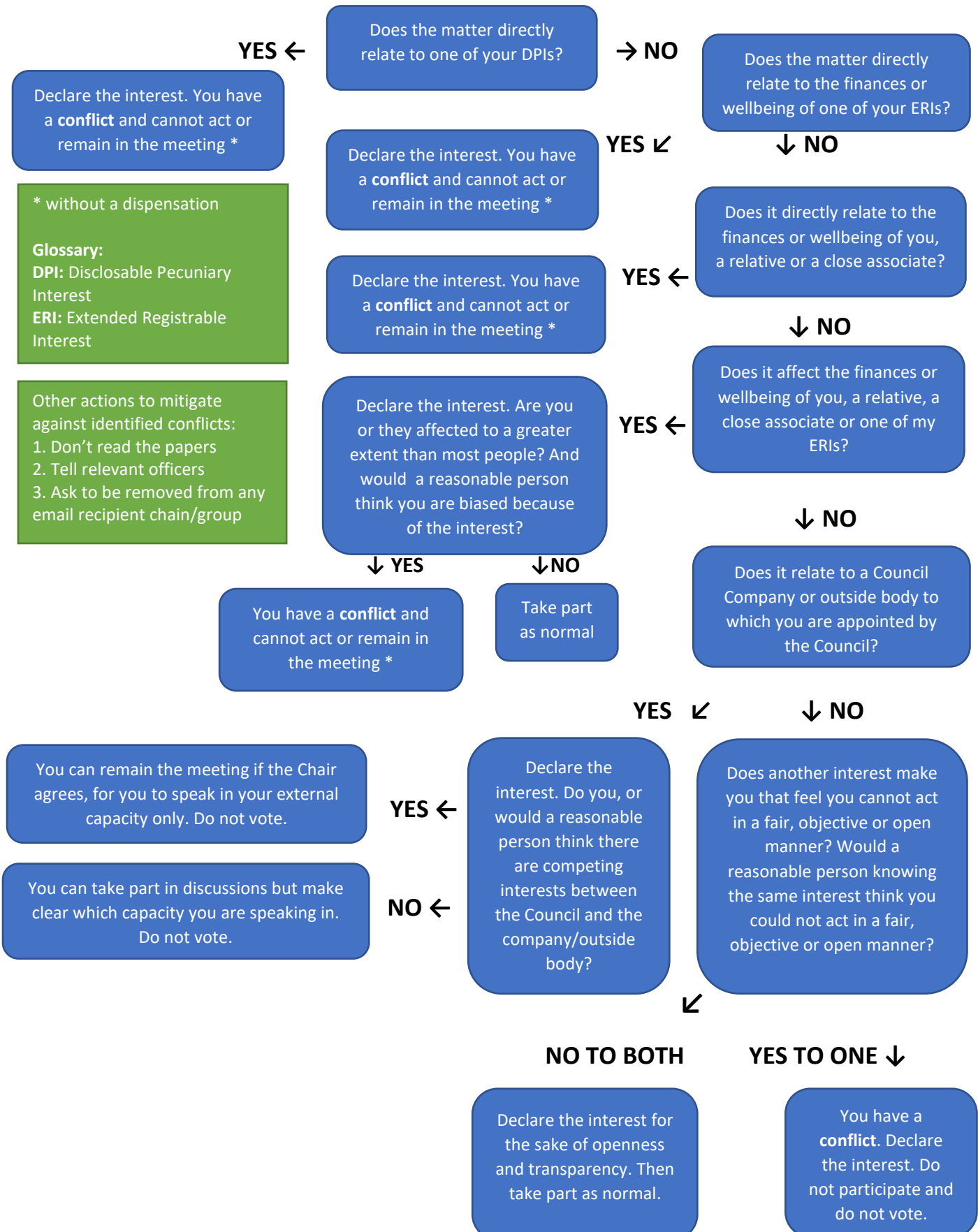
- 1) that Cabinet approved the Capital Strategy 2026/2027 as attached to this report for onward approval by Full Council.

The meeting closed at 6.30 pm

DECLARING AN INTEREST AND MANAGING ANY CONFLICTS FLOWCHART



START



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

* without a dispensation

Glossary:
DPI: Disclosable Pecuniary Interest
ERI: Extended Registrable Interest

Other actions to mitigate against identified conflicts:

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

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL 26 MARCH 2026 FROM THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 3 MARCH 2026

CAB14 **ADOPTION OF THE PROPERTY DISPOSAL POLICY**

[Click here to view the recording of this item on YouTube.](#)

The Portfolio Holder, Councillor Ring presented the strengthened property disposal policy. He added the revised policy included clearer guidance on the handling of confidential and commercial information during asset disposals, explicitly referencing relevant sections of the constitution to ensure proper conduct by portfolio holders, ward members, and community representatives.

The Chair, Councillor Beales highlighted the recommendation made from the Corporate Performance Panel following the call – in process; *“During potential asset disposals portfolio holders, ward members, parish councils and other community representatives may have confidential / commercial information shared with them, it is important that the status of such documentation is respected and not shared wider.”*

The Chair, Councillor Beales identified 1.4 of the report which amended the recommendation further to include the relevant part of the constitution; *“During potential asset disposals portfolio holders, ward members, parish councils and other community representatives where necessary may have confidential / commercial information shared with them. It is important that the constitution is adhered to in this regard in particular “Part 2 – Articles – Rights and Duties of Councillors, paragraphs 2.05 to 2.07”.*

In response to a question from Councillor Moriarty, it was confirmed that previous additional wording was removed, and the new addition provides direct signposting to constitutional requirements, simplifying the policy and ensuring clarity.

The Cabinet agreed to adopt the strengthened policy, recognising its importance for managing asset disposals and responding to ongoing inquiries, with the recommendation to be forwarded to full Council for final approval.

RECOMMENDED: Cabinet resolves to recommend to Full Council the adoption of the Property Disposal Policy attached as Appendix 1 with the following amendments in the Governance Arrangements and Oversight section:

During potential asset disposals portfolio holders, ward members, parish councils and other community representatives where necessary may have confidential / commercial information shared with them. It is important that the constitution is adhered to in this regard in particular “Part 2 – Articles – Rights and Duties of Councillors, paragraphs 2.05 to 2.07”.

REASON FOR DECISION: There is currently no formal policy in place.

RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL 26 MARCH 2026 FROM THE ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING ON 12 MARCH 2026

Hilgay Community Governance Review - Next Steps

The Monitoring Officer presented the report as included in the Agenda and drew the Committee's attention to the recommendations within the report. The Committee were required to make a recommendation to Full Council on the way forward.

Clive Joynes highlighted the responses received and the breakdown in responses between Hilgay and Ten Mile Bank residents, as included in the report. He acknowledged that smaller Parishes usually had less resources, smaller precepts and admin expenses could be higher.

Councillor Crofts commented on the low response rate and Clive Joynes commented that 6.5% response rate was considered significant and the Committee would have to make a judgement on what was best for the Communities.

Councillor Parish commented that often smaller Parishes shared a Parish Clerk to share costs. He also asked if now was the right time to proceed given Local Government Reorganisation.

Councillor Kemp made reference to the geographical size of the two areas and potential precepts.

Councillor Dickinson made reference to the population size of the two areas and felt that precepts should be split by actual tax payers rather than a percentage. Councillor Dickinson asked if further consultation could take place and was informed that there were strict procedures that needed to be followed. Councillor Dickinson commented that there were smaller Parishes in existence compared to the two proposed in this report.

Councillor Blunt referred to the Walpoles and that the Parish was split into three divisions and expenses were shared. He commented that Parishes could work together with separate divisions. He also raised concern that it could be difficult to encourage Parish Councillors to stand for election and ensure meetings were quorate.

Councillor Everett made reference to a duplication of resources should the Parishes be split, which could pass on additional costs to residents.

The Chair, Councillor Beales commented that there would always be a cost to democracy and provided information on comparative Parishes current precept levels. He referred to the responses to the consultation and that people had expressed a want for this.

The Committee discussed the current working arrangements of the Parish and the breakdown in relationships and asked if the Council could work with the Parishes to mediate.

Councillor Kemp proposed an amendment to Option 1, that help and support be offered to the Parish Council, should the decision be to not proceed with the Community Governance Review.

The Monitoring Officer set out the type of support that could be offered, including mediation and training.

Councillor Kemp's amendment was seconded, and after being put to the vote it was agreed that Option 1 in the recommendation be amended to read:

(Option 1):

1. Hilgay Parish and Hilgay Parish Council to remain unchanged and continue to be a warded Parish Council, comprising of:
 - Hilgay Ward &
 - Ten Mile Bank Ward

This will formally close the Community Governance Review.

2. To request that the Monitoring Officer provide assistance to the Parish Council in terms of Governance and Decision Making.

The Committee then voted on which option they would be recommending to Full Council (with option 1, as amended). Four Members voted for Option 1 and three Members voted for option 2.

RECOMMENDED:

1. Hilgay Parish and Hilgay Parish Council to remain unchanged and continue to be a warded Parish Council, comprising of:
 - Hilgay Ward &
 - Ten Mile Bank Ward

This will formally close the Community Governance Review.

2. To request that the Monitoring Officer provide assistance to the Parish Council in terms of Governance and Decision Making.

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Open				
Lead Member Councillor A Beales Email: cllr.Alistair.Beales@West-Norfolk.gov.uk				
Lead Officer: Rebecca Parker E-mail: rebecca.parker@west-norfolk.gov.uk			Other Officers consulted: Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Deputy 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: 26th March 2026

WAIVER OF SIX-MONTH COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE RULE

At the Full Council meeting on 27th November 2025, Full Council approved the waiver of the six-month attendance rule for Councillor Don Tyler, due to ill health.

The six month period expires on 26th May 2026. A further request has been made to extend this period for a further six months.

<p>RECOMMENDED:</p> <p>1. That Council consider the request to extend the waiver to the six-month attendance rule, for a further six months, provided for within Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act for Councillor Don Tyler due to illness.</p> <p>2. If approved the permitted non-attendance time period for the second six-month period, would expire on 26th November 2026.</p>

1. Background and Key Issues

- 1.1 Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a member of a Local Authority to attend at least one meeting of that Authority within a six-month consecutive period, in order to avoid being disqualified as a Councillor. This requirement can be waived and the time limit extended if any failure to attend was due to a reason approved by the Authority, in advance of the six-month period expiring.
- 1.2 Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that “if a member of a Local Authority fails, throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Authority they will, unless the failure was due to some good reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the Authority.”

- 1.3 Due to ill health Councillor Don Tyler has not been able to attend any Council meetings since the meeting of Council on 17th July 2025.
- 1.4 At the Full Council meeting on 27th November 2025, Council approved the waiver of the six-month rule for the period up to 26th May 2026.
- 1.5 A request has been made to extend this period for a further six months to the period 26th November 2026.
- 1.6 Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 enables a Local Authority to approve the reason(s) for non-attendance of a Member at any meeting of the Authority throughout a period of six consecutive months, provided that approval is given by the Authority before the expiry of the six-month period. Once any councillor loses office, through failure to attend for the six-month period, the disqualification cannot be overcome by the councillor subsequently resuming attendance nor can retrospective approval of the Authority be sought for an extension in time.

2. Alternative Options considered

- 2.1 Members may consider granting a waiver over a different time period other than an additional six months.
- 2.2 If the Council were not to approve the reason for absence, a vacancy would then arise on expiry of the initial six-month period of absence, 26th May 2026.

3. Financial Implication

- 3.1 Councillors that have been granted an extended period of absence will continue to receive their allowance unless otherwise requested.

4. Statutory Implication

- 4.1 If approval is not provided to waive the six-month attendance rule then Councillor Tyler will cease to be a Member of the Authority after 26th May 2026

5. Background Documents

Local Government Act 1972

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Open				
Lead Member Cllr Alistair Beales. Leader Email: cllr.alistair.beales@west-norfolk.gov.uk				
Lead Officer: Emma Hodds, Monitoring Officer E-mail: emma.hodds@west-norfolk.gov.uk			Other Officers consulted: Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive & Section 151 Officer, Democratic Services Manager	
Financial Implications NO	Policy/Personnel Implications YES	Statutory Implications YES	Equality Impact Assessment req'd Pre-screening – neutral assessment	Risk Management Implications NO

Date of Meeting: 26 March 2026

Constitution Review

It is the duty of the Council to ensure that its Constitution is fit for purpose and in line with legislation, to achieve this there is a Constitution Informal Working Group, supported by the Monitoring Officer and the Democratic Services Manager.

This report provides a required update to the Constitution following a review by the working group.

RECOMMENDED: The proposed changes to the Constitution at Appendix 1, 2 and 3 are approved, effective immediately.

1. Background

- 1.1 This report proposes changes to the Constitution, based on the recent work undertaken by the Constitution Informal Working Group (CIWG). The Corporate Performance Panel were also invited to the working group, as the changes herein are required to go straight to Council as the HR changes need to be actioned for the new financial year in line with discussions held with UNISON.
- 1.2 The CIWG was convened and supported by the Monitoring Officer and the Democratic Services Manager to ensure the Constitution is complete, accurate, up to date, clear, consistent, lawful and fit for purpose.

2. Proposed Changes

Standing Order 34

- 2.1 The Group discussed potential revisions to this Standing Order to differentiate between those Committee Members attending remotely under Standing Order 34 if they were unable to attend the meeting and those non-Committee Members requesting to speak under Standing Order 34 and agreed that it would be good to make reference to this in the Standing Order.
- 2.2 The Group agreed that providing as much notice as possible was courteous for non-Committee Members and the Monitoring Officer agreed to come up with wording regarding the deadline for notifying the Chair that Members would be attending under Standing Order 34, which would be by 12 noon, the day of the meeting, unless the meeting was being held prior to 12 noon.
- 2.3 The Group acknowledged that it was important to provide provision for non-committee Members to input into meetings and Chairs discretion was important.
- 2.4 The rules regarding giving notice, would not be applicable to Committee Members attending remotely under Standing Order 34 and the constitution would make this clear.
- 2.5 The Group discussed the time limit of 5 minutes per speech, in line with other rules and agreed that this should be stated in the Standing Order, with Chairs discretion.
- 2.6 With this proposal in mind Standing Order 34 is proposed to be amended as outlined at **Appendix 1** to this report. Note changes are emboldened and / or highlighted for ease of reference.

Notice of Motions

- 2.7 This revision is proposed to formalise the structure of Motions to make it clearer to Members on what resolution was required. It was noted that officers were available to support Members with the wording of Notices of Motion.
- 2.8 Motions need to be clear and concise to encourage debate and structured to firstly state what “the Council notes” and secondly “what the Council resolves to”. It is recognised that this approach is largely taken forwards for motions by Members and it is proposed that this is therefore formalised.
- 2.9 **Appendix 2** to this report, sets out the proposed addition to this section of the Constitution. Note changes are emboldened and / or highlighted for ease of reference.

Appeals

- 2.10 The Council as the employing body for staff has recently reviewed all policies with UNISON to ensure that these remain compliant with legislation and align where possible with the Norfolk wide approach. Presently all appeals are required to be heard by Members.

2.11 As a result of the review the appeal route for staff in relation to disciplinary or grievance processes now needs to rest with the Head of Paid Service within the delegation's section of the Constitution. These will then be internally delegated to senior managers in accordance with the policy. An example of the process would be as follows:

- Line Managers, Service Managers and Assistant Directors can undertake hearings
- Chief Executive and Chief Officers can undertake hearings and appeals

2.12 It is noted that hearings and appeals for Statutory Officers must be heard by Members and a full report on this will be provided to the CIWG at a future date to ensure that this is fit for purpose and in line with legislation.

2.13 **Appendix 3** to this report, sets out the proposed deletion from the Licensing and Appeals Board and the addition to the delegations section of the Constitution. Note changes are emboldened and / or highlighted for ease of reference.

3. Policy Implications

3.1 The review of the Constitution supports the effectiveness of the Council's governance framework which is reported on annually through the Annual Governance Statement.

4. Financial Implications

4.1 Not applicable to this report.

5. HR Implications

5.1 The changes outlined within this report ensure that the staffing procedures are in line with the relevant policies.

6. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

6.1 Not applicable to this report.

7. Statutory and Legal Implications

7.1 The report is in line with the legislative requirement under the Local Government Act 2000, Chapter 5 Supplementary, 9P Local Authority constitution, for local authorities to prepare a constitution and ensure this is kept up to date. The proposed changes are included in the appendices to this report.

8. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 The pre-screening report is attached to this report and the impact is neutral.

9. Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 The Constitution review and recommendations to Council seek to mitigate the following strategic risk: Corporate Governance (R7) and Statutory Compliance (R11).

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 The report presented to Council is proposed by the CIWG for adoption.

Appendix 1

Standing Orders

34A Rights of non-members to attend meetings of Council bodies

34A.1 Every Member of the Council shall have the right:

- (a) to attend any meeting of a Council body plus Informal Working Groups;
- (b) to speak at any meeting of a Council body plus Informal Working Groups, except, for the purposes of this Standing Order:
 - (i) The Licensing Committee, the Licensing and Appeals Board, Standards Committee Panel Hearings, Appointments Board Interviews and Investigatory and Disciplinary Committee Hearings
 - (ii) In the case of Planning Committee:
 - The Ward Member(s) for the relevant application/item can speak; and/or
 - at the discretion of the Chair of the Planning Committee, other Members can speak provided that two days clear notice shall be given of any intention to speak on an application/item along with a brief summary of what they intend to say.

With the exception of Planning Committee, a Member shall inform Democratic Services and the Chair **by 12 noon on the day of the meeting, or by 5pm the day before if a morning meeting** ~~before the meeting commences~~ of their intention to attend and/or speak, as appropriate, specifying on what items they wish to be heard.

34A.2 Any Member of the Council speaking at a meeting of a Council body, including Task Groups, under this Standing Order must, in any event, conclude what they wish to say in relation to the issue or issues **under consideration prior to any decision being taken on that issue or issues. Any Member speaking under this rule may speak for up to 5 minutes on each agenda item, with Chairs discretion applied where appropriate.**

34A.3 The minutes of the Meeting shall record the name of any Member of the Council who is present at the meeting under this Standing Order together with any item on which they spoke.

34A.4 For the purposes of this Standing Order the right to speak at:

- (a) Cabinet is limited only to a right to make a statement, subject to the discretion of the Chair;
- (b) Scrutiny and Overview Bodies includes the right to ask questions;
- (c) Any other Council Bodies, including Task Groups and Informal Working Groups, includes the right to contribute to the debate of the item on which they wish to be heard.

34B Committee Members attending remotely under Standing Order 34

34B.1 Constituted Members of a Committee that are unable to attend under Standing Order 34 can either:

- (a) send a substitute who has their full rights physically in the meeting, or
- (b) attend virtually online, and whilst they can participate in the debate they will not be able to vote

34B.2 A notice period is not required in this regard, as it is recognised that the need to send a substitute can occur late in the day, however it is requested where an absence is known in advance notice is provided and the Member actively seeks a substitute.

Appendix 2

Council Procedure Rules

7 Notice of Motion

Notice requirements

7.3 A Member who wishes to propose a Notice of Motion must provide such notice of their proposed motion in accordance with this Rule 7.3. The notice shall:-

7.3.1 be in writing and limited to no more than 250 words;

7.3.2 state the motion that the Member desires to move in such a way that it is clear what the Member is proposing;

7.3.3 be delivered to the Chief Executive at least seven clear working days before the date of the meeting of the Ordinary Meeting at which it is proposed to debate the motion;

7.3.4 state the date of the meeting at which Council is to be invited to debate the motion if it is not the next Ordinary Meeting for which it is eligible; and

7.3.5 not contravene Rule 7.4 below.

7.3.6 be structured to firstly state what “the Council notes” and secondly “what the Council resolves to”

Appendix 3

Part 3 – Terms of Reference and Responsibilities for Council Functions

D Licensing and Appeals Board

- D.10 Hear and determine appeals by Council employees where such a right is part of the relevant personnel procedure.

The above section is to be removed from the Constitution, with the following addition made in the scheme of delegation.

Part 3 – Scheme of delegation

- 10 Council Functions delegated to Chief Executive

Day to day management of personnel function within the Council, including development of appropriate protocols in accordance with policy across the Council, including pay award negotiation, performance related pay, honoraria (as advised by Service managers or Management Team in the case of service head or above), leave arrangements, recruitment arrangements, disciplinary arrangements including suspension of service/compromise/termination arrangements, retirement arrangements, implementation of job evaluation **and any appeals process.**



Stage 1 - Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

For equalities profile information please visit [Norfolk Insight - Demographics and Statistics - Data Observatory](#)

Name of policy/service/function	Review of the constitution				
Is this a new or existing policy/service/function? (<i>tick as appropriate</i>)	New		Existing	X	
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened. Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations, and identify relevant legislation.	<p>It is a statutory requirement to continually review the Constitution, under the Local Government Act 2000.</p> <p>Through the work of the Constitution Informal Working Group, supported by the Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Manager, a Schedule of Substantive Changes are proposed and attached as Annex 1 to this report.</p> <p>The attached Schedule identifies the relevant legislation where applicable. The proposed changes improve governance within the Constitution and have no direct impact on service delivery or decisions affecting members of the public.</p>				
Who has been consulted as part of the development of the policy/service/function? – new only (<i>identify stakeholders consulted with</i>)	Constitution Informal Working Group				
Question	Answer				
<p>1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group. NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p> <p><i>If potential adverse impacts are identified, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 2) will be required.</i></p> <p><i>*For more information on health inequalities please visit The King's Fund</i></p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			X	
	Disability			X	
	Sex			X	
	Gender Re-assignment			X	
	Marriage/civil partnership			X	
	Pregnancy & maternity			X	
	Race			X	
	Religion or belief			X	
	Sexual orientation			X	
	Armed forces community			X	
	Care leavers			X	
	Health inequalities*			X	
Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)			X		



<p>Please provide a brief explanation of the answers above:</p> <p>The proposed changes improve governance within the Constitution and have no direct impact on service delivery or decisions affecting members of the public.</p>		
Question	Answer	Comments
<p>2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?</p>	No	
<p>3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?</p>	No	
<p>If 'yes' to questions 2 - 3 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:</p> <p>Decision agreed by EWG member:</p>		
<p>4. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions?</p> <p>If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	N/A	<p>Actions:</p>
		<p>Actions agreed by EWG member:</p> <p>.....</p>
<p>5. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?</p>	No	<p>Please provide brief summary:</p>
<p>Assessment completed by:</p>		
<p>Name</p>	<p>Emma Hodds</p>	
<p>Job title</p>	<p>Chief of Staff and Monitoring Officer</p>	
<p>Date completed</p>	<p>10 March 2026</p>	



Reviewed by EWG member	Amy Pearce	Date	13 March 2026
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✓ Please tick to confirm completed EIA Pre-screening Form has been shared with Corporate Policy (corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk)

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Open				
Lead Member Councillor Brian Long Email: cllr.brian.long@west-norfolk.gov.uk			Other Officers consulted: Monitoring Officer and Democratic Services Manager	
Financial Implications NO	Policy/Personnel Implications NO	Statutory Implications NO	Equality Impact Assessment req'd NO	Risk Management Implications NO

Date of Meeting : 26th March 2026

CHAIR OF CORPORATE PERFORMANCE PANEL ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL

Summary: The Terms of Reference of the Corporate Performance Panel state that the Chair will report annually to the full Council on the work that the Panel has completed during the preceding 12 months. This report from the Chair outlines the work carried out by the Panel for the period May 2025 to March 2026.

RECOMMENDATION: That full Council note the report.

1 Background

The function of the Panel, as set out in the Constitution, is to:

- (a) Consider matters affecting the borough or local people.
- (b) Review the performance of the Council specifically in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets or services.
- (c) Post implementation review of major projects and significant policy changes and the introduction of new policies
- (d) Monitor the medium-term Financial Plan
- (e) Assist in advancing the development of effective policy for promoting or improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the people and communities of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk
- (f) Question members of the Cabinet and senior officers about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with Directorate plans and targets over time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects.
- (g) Review the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the relevant Policy Review and Development Panel about their activities and performance.
- (h) Question and gather evidence from any other willing person
- (i) Make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Cabinet in connection with the discharge of their functions.

2. Scrutiny of Cabinet Decisions and Policy Development Work including Call – in’s for the period May 2025 to March 2026

2.1 Over the municipal year the Panel have considered the following Cabinet reports and made recommendations to Cabinet.

2.1.a Policy Development and Review

Debt Recovery Policy – May 2025

2025 Cost of Living Pay Award – July 2025

Leisure Facilities Feasibility Study – July 2025

Microsoft Enterprise Licence – July 2025

Report and Recommendations from the Constitution Informal Working Group – September 2025

Florence Fields – Review of Tenure Mix – October 2025

Transformation Programme – LGR Readiness – January 2026

Update from the Constitution Informal Working Group – Scrutiny Guidance and Information – February 2026

2.1.b Monitoring the Medium Term Financial Plan and Budget Monitoring

Revenue and Capital Outturn Reports – July 2025

Q1 Budget Monitoring Report – September 2025

Council Tax Support Scheme 2026/2027 – October 2025

Cabinet Report – Quarter 3 Budget Monitoring – April 2026

2.1.c Performance Monitoring

Full Year Performance Management Report – May 2025

2025-2026 Performance Indicator Target Setting Report – May 2025

2025-2027 Action Plan – June 2026

Update and History of Major Housing Projects and Programme – September 2025

Quarter 1 2025 – 2026 Performance Management Report – September 2025

Q2 2025-2026 Performance Management – January 2026

Annual Complaints, FOI and Data Protection Monitoring Report. – February 2026

Q3 2025-2026 Performance Management Report – February 2026

2.1 d Call – in’s

Cabinet Members Delegated Decision – Styleman Court Disposal Strategy – June 2025

Cabinet Recommendation – Asset Disposal Policy – February 2026

3 Informal Working Group

3.1 The Panel have one established informal working group.

3.1.a **Constitution Informal Working Group.** This Group was established in May 2024. The Terms of Reference of the Group includes reviewing the Constitution to ensure that it is fit for purpose and lawful and undertaking deep

dives of specific parts of the Constitution. The Group met on several occasions during 2025 and presented the update Scrutiny Information to the Panel which was endorsed in February 2026 and available on the intranet for Members. The Scrutiny Information was updated following the Joint Panel in October 2025 where Members considered a review of Scrutiny Governance arrangements with the outcome that further work to improve the Scrutiny function was carried out including improving work programming and training.

The updated and review Scrutiny documents included;

- Scrutiny and Executive Protocol
- Scrutiny Guide
- How to Select Scrutiny Work Topics and Work Programming
- Terms of Reference for Sifting Meetings
- Role Profile – Scrutiny Chair
- Summary of Call-in procedure.

The Informal Working Group will continue to consider and discuss amendments to the Constitution.

4 Joint Panel Meetings

4.1 Three Joint Panel Meetings were held during 2025/2026

- September 2025 – Final Proposal for Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk
- October 2025 – Scrutiny Governance Review
- January 2026 – The Budget

4.2 The Chairs and Vice Chairs of all three Panels also meet on a regular basis to consider the Cabinet Forward Decisions List and co-ordinate the work of the Panels.

5 Plan for Next Year – 2026/2027

5.1 The Constitution Informal Working Group will continue their work

5.2 The Chairs and Vice Chairs of all Panels will continue to meet to co-ordinate the work of all three Panels and arrange Joint Panel meetings where there are cross-cutting issues.

5.3 As part of the continued work on Scrutiny development, members are encouraged to attend the Scrutiny Workshops provided to set out the Panels Work Programme for the next Municipal Year; along with other training being provided to Members in preparation for Local Government Reorganisation.

5.4 Members of the Panel are encouraged to submit items for consideration by the Panel.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL**26 March 2026****COUNCILLOR MICHAEL de WHALLEY - CABINET MEMBER FOR CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY**

For the period 15 January 2026 to 18 March 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.**Solar Together**

Household registrations for the group buying scheme closed last year.

46 households have agreed to installation work and 16 have completed so far. 202 panels have been installed which equates to 91kW of generation and approximately £140,000 of householder investment. Thirteen batteries have also been installed for that cohort. Works for all 46 households should be completed by May 2026.

Mayor's Business Awards – Environmental Champion

Two businesses were shortlisted for the 2026 award; British Sugar, Wissington Factory and Goodwins Hall Care Home. The winner, British Sugar, was announced at the awards evening on 6 March 2026. I look forward to reading the entries for 2027 later this year.

Carbon Audit

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

Carbon Literacy Training

Our e-learning provider is processing final amendments to the learning content for use in the council's e-learning platform, which will be made available for all staff and members.

Village Green, South Lynn

The Village Green application for South Lynn is currently awaiting further information from Natural England relating to the Doorstep Green before it can be finalised by Norfolk County Council.

South Lynn Community Orchard & Beuys' Acorns

The project nears completion with installation of CCTV at the community orchard. We are awaiting final designs for the interpretation boards.

Vehicle Fleet Review

Following a successful bid to a national grant scheme, work is progressing to improve the electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure at the Oldmedow Road site. The works will be installed by end of March 2026 and will provide 5 EV charging sockets.

The caretakers' van has been replaced with a battery electric vehicle. A new council livery has been designed to promote the vehicle's green credentials.



Ferry

As part of our commitment to the long-term viability of the ferry service, the authority's Property Services department has commissioned Richard Jackson

Ltd Engineering Consultants to undertake a routine annual inspection of the landing facilities.

This survey, commissioned in partnership with Norfolk County Council, is a proactive measure to assess the structural integrity of the current site. The data gathered will help:

- Quantify the remaining lifespan of the existing infrastructure
- Inform the feasibility study by providing a clear technical baseline for potential future investments
- Ensure continued compliance and operational stability for the current service

Our current investigations are a complex undertaking, focused on ensuring that all future designs are fully informed by the physical and environmental realities of the river. It is vital that we first understand how existing structures influence river flow, as this technical data is critical to the longevity of any new infrastructure.

While the feasibility study is evaluating a range of solutions precise technical specifications will be looked at during the formal design stage in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

Our current investigations are reviewing the complex historical ownership of the facilities. While a definitive "paper trail" has proven elusive due to various historical transitions between authorities, we are continuing to review correspondence to gain further clarity.

From an engineering perspective, we are treating the protection of this historical asset as a priority. Any proposed construction adjacent to the Rennie Jetty involves technical risks that must be mitigated to protect both the new infrastructure and the historical asset itself, which continues to function as intended.

We are working diligently toward the completion of this study. While the process has taken longer than originally anticipated, the complexity of the site merits this level of deep investigation. It is essential that the final report is robust enough to withstand the necessary scrutiny from both Members and the public. The ferry operator has been updated and consulted on these current works. I and officers look forward to providing a full briefing upon completion of the study.

Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP)

Following a successful funding bid to Innovate UK, work is underway on the development of:

- An online retrofit website
- the Energy Champions model established in Norwich
- Community building decarbonisation in collaboration with Community Action Norfolk
- Heritage Retrofit guidance

A seminar for planning officers has been arranged on 16 March 2026 addressing external wall insulation drawing upon experiences of applicants and installers.

Whilst local authorities focus on local government reorganisation, administration of the partnership will be undertaken by the Tyndall Centre, University of East Anglia.

LED Lighting

There are now proposals for covering the tennis courts with a canopy, with support from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). If the LTA scheme is approved and brought forward, the tennis courts will require a different lighting strategy. It is now considered that the tennis courts should be removed from scope for the current LED upgrades, with replacement lighting installed on the MUGA and Pelican's Pitches only. Project spend is pending authorisation, following which the upgrades are due to be considered for CIL funding.

Similarly, once spend is authorised for upgrades at the depot, electrical contractors will be invited to quote for identified LED replacements at this building.

Streetlighting Phase II

Property Services have completed a review of the columns proposed for upgrade and identified several lanterns not in our ownership, resulting in some changes to scope. For our heritage style fittings, where we had previously intended to install straightforward bulb replacements, we have also been advised to install LED gear trays, given lack of space within some lantern heads. The gear tray option is also a warranted solution, with a fifteen-year warranty.

We are in discussions with our contractors to understand and agree on the costs associated with these revisions but are targeting an April start for the first round of LED replacements.

Re:Fit

Panasonic have issued written confirmation that the warranty agreements on their equipment can be reinstated. Whilst this is a significant step forward, the overall performance from the heat pumps is still not meeting with expectations. We are reviewing our options in consultation with legal and Salix (the programme managers for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme).

Solar Panels

Once spend is authorised, we will be moving to launch a tender exercise to procure these works. One of the challenges previously faced, when developing schemes for the Corn Exchange building, has been identification of a suitable mounting system. Recent discussions with a specialist roofing contractor, however, have indicated that a solution can be found. The other sites proposed for upgrade are Downham Market Leisure Centre and King's Lynn Innovation Centre (KLIC).

Biodiversity Officer

Since being appointed, our Biodiversity Officer has worked on the following projects:

- South Lynn Community Orchard
Pathway installed, hedgerow planted, replacement trees, strimming and clearing
Benches installed
Installation of bins
Working with the Men's Shed to build raised planters
- Howdale
Working with Nature Volunteer Network
Planting shrubs
Preparing wildflower areas
- Heacham Ponds
Working with the northern grounds team to clear the pond of willow and scrub during the dry season
The ponds have been transformed
- The Willows – Downham Market County Wildlife Site
With funding secured from the EA, the first phase of clearance works has occurred to deal with a historic lack of maintenance
Volunteer interest obtained moving forward
- King's Lynn Habitat Creation Project
A future project looking at improving our Open Spaces for biodiversity
- Wildlife surveys over the spring months

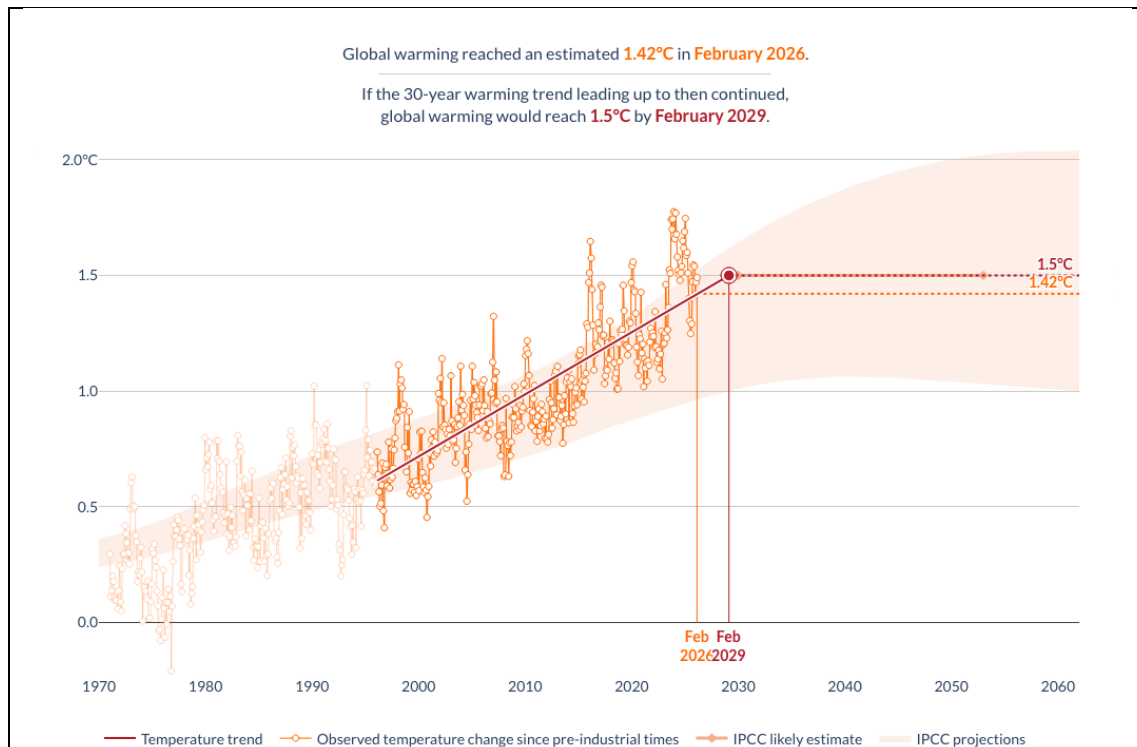
Air Quality

Air quality levels of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) have steadily fallen over the last few years within the Railway Road Extended Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in King's Lynn. Given NO₂ levels have not exceeded the legal air quality annual mean limit for the last 5 years within the AQMA there is an obligation to review and revoke. We will bring this to committee for discussion. On revocation an air quality strategy will be developed in due course. It is fully intended that monitoring will continue.

Climate

Since the 1980s the UK climate has been warming at a rate of approximately 0.25°C per decade. UK sea levels have risen 19.5cm since 1901.

Source: "State of the UK Climate in 2024," Met Office National Climate Information Centre, Exeter, UK.



PROGRAMME OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION



IMPLEMENTED BY



Source: *European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), The Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S).*

February 2026 was the fifth-warmest February on record globally, with an average surface air temperature of 13.26°C, 0.28°C cooler than the record set in February 2024. February was about 1.49°C warmer than an estimate of the February average for 1850-1900, the designated pre-industrial reference period.

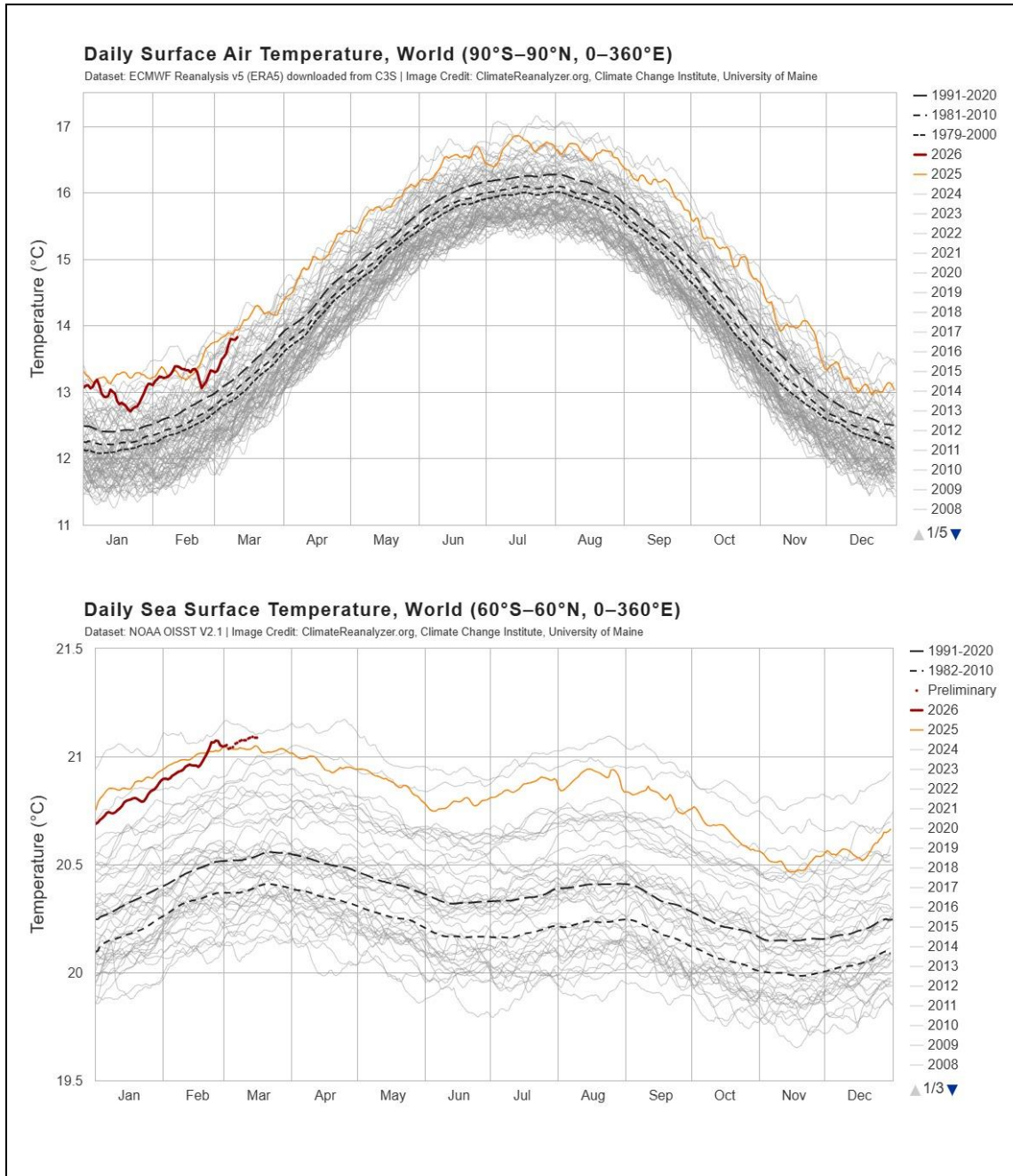
The average global sea surface temperature (SST) for February 2026 over 60°S to 60°N was 20.88°C, the joint second-highest for the month in the dataset (with February 2025), 0.18°C below the record set in February 2024. Sea surface temperature is defined over the global extrapolar ocean, from 60°S to 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 February 2026 was 14.1 million km², circa 5% (0.7 million km²) below the 1991–2020 average, the third-lowest monthly extent for February in the 48-year satellite record.

The average Antarctic sea ice extent for the month was 3.2 million km², about 3% (0.1 million km²) below the 1991–2020 average. This is in sharp contrast to the large negative anomalies of 25% to 33% observed in the past four years

Data source: OSI SAF Sea Ice Index v2.3



2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Beat Your Bills Roadshow

Further dates are in the process of being arranged

Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

Following scrutiny at Environment and Community Panel on 14 April 2026, Cabinet will be considering the refreshed climate change strategy and action plan on 23 April 2026. The strategy will guide our decarbonisation work until Norfolk’s new local government structure commences. The proposed strategy maintains our twin approach to reduce the Council’s carbon footprint and to encourage the wider community to address climate change. Over the next few

years I look forward to the emergence of an exemplar facility at the St George's Guildhall and continuation of our current community focused work with households, businesses and young people.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Cabinet Briefings
Cabinet Sifting
Cabinet

Gaywood River Study Stakeholders Meeting(IDB)
West Lynn Ferry Walkabout
STARS Tour
King's Lynn Conservancy Board
King's Lynn IDB Meeting
Mayor's Awards Site Visit – Goodwins Hall
Mayor's Awards Site Visit – British Sugar Wissington Factory
Member Briefing - Values and Behaviours
Planning Committee Training
Member Briefing - Customer Services Systems Review
Anglian Water Briefing
LGIU Roundtable – Energy Transition in Local Government
Climate Change Informal Working Group
Schools Project Meeting
Joint Cabinet Away Session with Breckland Cabinet
MAG 001 Norfolk Groundwater Challenges
Member Briefing – Norfolk & Waveney University Hospitals Group Update
Norfolk Climate Change Partnership Portfolio Holders Meeting
Norfolk Coastal Forum
Biodiversity Ranger Update
Tour of New King's Lynn Library
Housing Delivery Strategy Review
Scrutiny Training Workshop 1
Garden Wildlife Project Meeting
King's Lynn and West Norfolk Area Museums Committee
NWN Catchment Partnership Meeting (CaBA)

Portfolio Holder Briefings and updates:

Climate Change Updates
West Lynn Ferry Updates

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

26th March 2026

COUNCILLOR SUE LINTERN - CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND EVENTS

For the period 20th January to 13th March

Events Programme

The Borough's events programme for the coming year is largely finalised, with a small number of additional events still under consideration. As in previous years, a full schedule of free events will be delivered throughout the summer months, providing a wide range of activities for residents and visitors to enjoy. The programme will continue to include popular core summer events, with officers working to enhance the quality of events and the visitor experience while operating within existing budget constraints.

Officers are also exploring opportunities to introduce new elements to the programme, including a potential outdoor games event in the town centre. Planning has also begun for the borough's Christmas lights programme. In addition, officers are assessing the feasibility of introducing outdoor film nights at The Walks, with logistical considerations currently under review. A further update will be provided should this initiative progress.

King's Lynn Culture Steering Group

The King's Lynn Culture Steering Group has recently been established and held its first meeting on Friday 30 January. The group comprises twelve members drawn from leading cultural organisations and stakeholders within the town. The Borough Councils Senior Tourism Officer will support the group's work and meetings as it develops its programme and strategic direction.

Cultural Partnerships

Meetings have taken place with a number of cultural partners to strengthen collaboration and support activity across the borough.

The Margery Kempe Trust is delivering a literary trail across King's Lynn during the Easter holidays. Participating venues will include the Fent Shop, the library, the Minster and the College, each hosting events aimed at both adults and children. This initiative is supported through the Love Your Market Town grant programme.

The Trust is also developing the "Stories of our Coast" project, focusing on life writing and storytelling, alongside the continuation of weekly life writing sessions held at the library. These activities have demonstrated benefits for community engagement, cross-cultural participation and mental wellbeing.

Further engagement has taken place with the King's Lynn Business Improvement District (BID) to explore how the Borough Council can support town centre events. As the BID represents the local business community, it is important that council activities complement and support the retail and hospitality sectors and contribute to economic growth.

King's Lynn Hanse Festival

Planning is progressing well for the King's Lynn Hanse Festival, scheduled to take place on Sunday 24 May from 10.00am to 6.00pm. The event will include a range of family activities, presentations and talks celebrating the town's Hanseatic heritage.

Town of Culture

The recently announced opportunity to bid for Town of Culture status has been positively received. However, given the scale of current regeneration projects at the Guildhall and the Custom House, it is considered that submitting a bid this year would be premature. Instead, the intention is to develop a strong bid for the following year. This period will allow time to build partnerships, develop a clear work programme and undertake engagement with residents and stakeholders. This initiative will be a key focus over the coming year.

Norfolk Records Committee

The Norfolk Record Office has recently secured Archive Service Accreditation. Digital archive storage is currently provided through Norfolk County Council, with approximately 18 months of storage capacity remaining ahead of the opening of a new facility scheduled for 2028.

Staff are currently investing considerable time in preparing grant applications to secure additional funding for ongoing work. Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) is expected to place further demands on staff resources, expertise and financial capacity in order to maintain safe and effective record keeping during the transition period.

The service also continues to support work placements for college students, which provides valuable additional capacity. A new Heritage Fund supported project, "Hallmarks – The Long Shadow of Norfolk's Lost Country Houses", will launch shortly. The project originates from research into tithe maps dating from 1841 and aims to promote the archive collections while providing opportunities for the public to explore local history. Workshops will be delivered across the county to support residents in researching the history of their own homes.

Museums Committee

The committee reviewed the performance of the newly reopened Norwich Castle. While some technical issues remain with the platform lift, visitor numbers and activity levels have been encouraging. Strong growth has been seen in the commercial hire market and retail activity, with retail buyers developing productive relationships with local makers.

The museum teaching programme recruits four trainees each year and is open to

applicants of all ages. This year the programme received over 500 applications. Current trainees are undertaking work on a project examining pilgrim badges.

A Finds Identification and Recording Day will take place on 14 March. At Gressenhall, the Environment Hub has engaged with more than 25,000 visitors, providing educational activities focused on farming, waste management and land stewardship. Public events include Open Farm Day, Apple Day and Earth Day. In 2027 Gressenhall will mark its 250th anniversary, and work is underway to explore funding opportunities to further investigate the site's history.

The Kick the Dust Green Team continues to develop environmental opportunities linked to the hub, including a tree nursery which supports the county council's One Million Trees project.

Officers are also exploring the inclusion of Norfolk Museum Service information within the Borough Council's News and Events webpage.

Alongside this environmental theme, a visit was made to the Wild Downham Market Day event, which showcased local wildlife through photography exhibitions and community displays. The event highlighted the work of local volunteers and organisations, including wildlife groups, the ornithological society, the Downham Market Swift Group and the Men's Shed, which produces bird boxes. The event demonstrated strong community commitment to local habitats and biodiversity.

Norfolk Arts Forum

The Norfolk Arts Forum met at the end of February. Members received an update from The Workshop regarding its plans to relocate to the former library building. The organisation provides creative opportunities for young people and is preparing for a public performance scheduled for April.

A presentation was also given by the GroundWork Gallery in King's Lynn, which specialises in exhibitions exploring the relationship between art and the environment. The gallery will celebrate its tenth anniversary this year.

The Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board provided updates on its work supporting economic growth, wellbeing and regional identity through arts, culture, creative industries and heritage. The board is advocating for the integration of culture within wider regional strategies and intends to engage with the new mayoral authority to ensure the cultural sector is recognised as a driver of economic development and business growth.

Guildhall

Demolition work continues at the Guildhall site. A live video feed of the works has proved popular with school visits and is currently available at No. 29, helping to encourage visitors to observe the progress of the project.

Shakespeare Week continues to be delivered in partnership with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon. The borough's Education Officer will deliver workshops and activities in both primary and secondary schools across the borough, reaching more than 700 children and young people. This year the programme has also expanded through a partnership with King Edward VII School. Shakespeare Week in King's Lynn has become one of the most successful programmes of its kind nationally. Plans are also underway for the annual Shakespeare's Birthday

celebration in April.

Tourism

The Senior Tourism Officer provided an update on the Tourism Development Plan, highlighting achievements over the past two years. The Explore West Norfolk website has been widely used, receiving more than 300,000 visits, and current work is focused on further developing the borough's cultural tourism offer.

Previous research undertaken in 2019 identified factors limiting the number of coach tours visiting King's Lynn, including the need for multiple attractions, extended opening hours, competitive pricing and sufficient accommodation and dining options. To support this sector, the tourism team maintains a monthly subscription with Coach Travel publications and advertises in industry magazines, including "Coach Touring – The Directory". Promotional material highlights King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton and provides suggested itineraries for tour operators.

The borough already hosts a number of established coach operators and frequently acts as a stop on wider touring routes. The tourism team also provides promotional information and works with Visit East of England to monitor visitor trends. Latest available figures for 2024 show day trips increasing by 2% to 10.2 million and overnight stays increasing by 1% to 513,000 visits, while overall visitor spending has increased by 12%.

The need for additional coach parking and hotel accommodation remains a key issue and is being addressed through the King's Lynn masterplan. Expanding the visitor experience is also essential, underlining the importance of regeneration projects such as the Guildhall and the Custom House.

Downham Market Visit

A visit was made to Downham Market with the Senior Tourism Officer and Cultural Champion. Meetings were held with the Town Council Chair and Clerk to discuss local priorities and potential areas of support. The visit also included a tour of the Denver Sluice site, where progress is being made by the Environment Agency in developing the area as a future visitor destination. The first major stage of this work has been completed with the reopening of the on-site public house and restaurant, the Jenyns Arms, in late February.

The visit concluded with discussions with Culture Babylon regarding opportunities to support tourism during the out-of-season months.

Summary

The portfolio continues to deliver a wide-ranging programme of cultural, heritage, tourism and community activity across the borough. This work strengthens partnerships, supports local organisations, promotes public engagement and contributes to economic growth, tourism and civic pride.

The delivery of these initiatives relies heavily on the commitment and expertise of the council's officer team, whose work ensures a strong and varied programme of events and activities while also supporting external organisations across the borough. Their contribution is greatly appreciated.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

King's Lynn & West Norfolk Area Museums committee
North Norfolk Arts Forum
Hansa Committee
Hunstanton visit

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

20/1 - Portfolio meeting
20/1 - Cabinet
20/1 - meeting with Cultural champion and The Book Festival
21/1 - Constitutional Informal Working Group
21/1 - portfolio meeting
22/1 - Budget scrutiny training
22/1 - News launch
26/1 - Portfolio meeting
26/1 - Planning training
27/1 - Cabinet sifting
28/1 - Joint panel
29/1 - meeting with The Margery Kempe Trust
29/1 - Pre-council briefing
29/1 - Full Council
30/1 - Cultural Steering Group
2/2 - Planning committee
2/2 - CIL briefing
2/2 - Cabinet briefing
3/2 - Cabinet
4/2 - Anglian Water briefing
6/2 - Norfolk Records committee
6/2 - Norfolk Joint Museums committee
7/2 - Downham Market wildlife exhibition
9/2 - CPP
10/2 - Local Plan Task Group
10/2 - meeting with the BID
10/2 - Portfolio meeting
10/2 - R&D
11/2 - Guildhall project board
11/2 - Portfolio meeting with Events team
11/2 - Cabinet briefing
12/2 - Portfolio meeting
13/2 - Joint Cabinet awayday with Breckland Cabinet
14/2 - Opening of The Mart
16/2 - Town of Culture meeting
16/2 - Ukraine briefing
17/2 - Portfolio meeting
20/2 - Cultural Steering Group
20/2 - Downham Market visit
23/2 - Planning training

24/2 - Meeting with Collusion
24/2 - Budget briefing
24/2 - E&C
25/2 - Portfolio meeting
25/2 - Norfolk Arts Forum
26/2 - Full Council
2/3 - Planning committee
2/3 - R&D
3/3 - Cabinet
4/3 - Transformation/LGR Readiness Programme board
4/3 - Renters rights briefing
6/3 - Tour of the new library
6/3 - Mayors Business awards
9/3 - Housing delivery strategy review
9/3 - review of SLA's
9/3 - Constitutional Informal Working group
11/3 - Guildhall project board

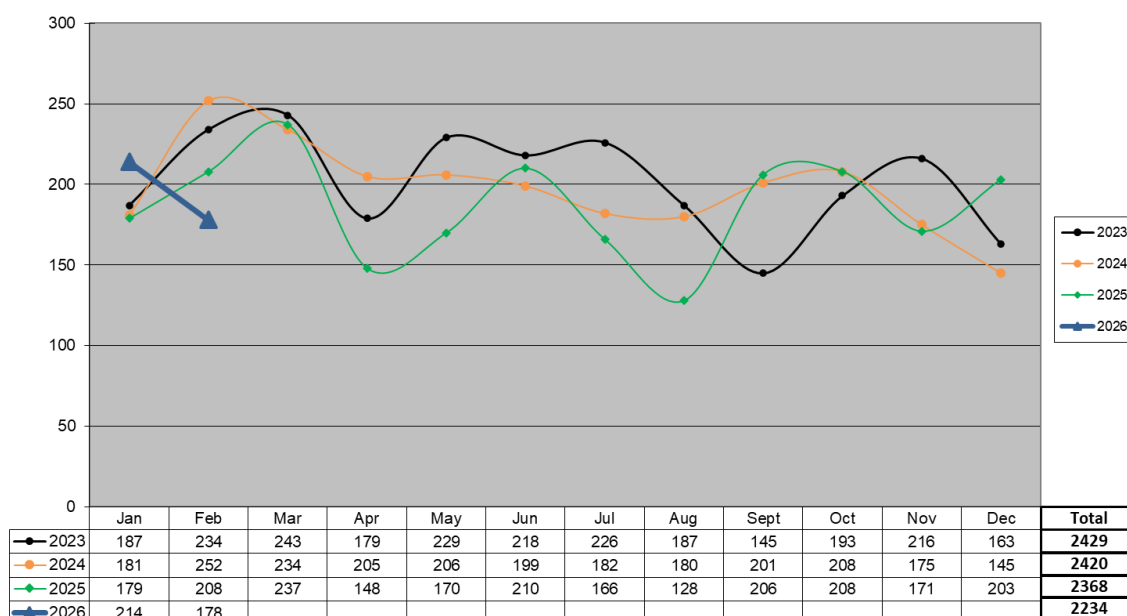
CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL
26 March 2026

COUNCILLOR JIM MORIARTY - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & LICENSING

Planning and Discharge of Conditions applications received

Application numbers for January and February are almost identical compared to the same period last year, 392 applications.

Planning and discharge of condition applications received



Major and Minor dwelling applications and householder applications received comparison

	1/3/23 – 28/2/24	1/3/24 – 28/2/25	1/3/25 – 28/2/26
No. of Major dwelling applications rec'd	18	22	29
No. of Minor dwelling applications rec'd	240	257	282
No. of Householder applications rec'd	613	621	540
Total	871	900	851

*Minor dwelling applications = up to 10 units *Major dwelling applications = over 10 units

2025/26 performance for determining planning applications 1/3/25 – 28/2/26

	National target	Performance
Major	60%	91%
Non – Major	70%	93%

Appeal Performance – appeal decisions made by The Planning Inspectorate between 1/3/25 – 28/2/26. This measure is different to the ‘quality of decision’ measure.

	Officer delegated		Committee overturns		Total	
	Dismissed	Allowed	Dismissed	Allowed	Dismissed	Allowed
Appeals						
Planning	38	11	3	7	41	18
	78%	22%	30%	70%	69%	31%
Enforcement	5	2				
	71%	29%				

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 January 2026 is calculated as follows:

Planning applications determined by the Local Planning Authority between 01/6/2023 to 31/5/2025 (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 = 28/2/2026.

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
111	1	0.90%

NON-MAJOR		
No. of Decisions Issued	No. Allowed on Appeal	% Overturned
2756	23	0.83%

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 – February 2026	April 25 – February 2026	
£1,116,958	£1,330,546	+£213,588

Development Management (DM) staff update

Unfortunately, our recent recruitment drive was not as successful as we had hoped as we were unable to recruit to the Principal Planner and Planner role. However, we were successful in recruiting two Graduate Planners and they will be starting in April and July respectively.

Recruitment to senior planning roles is a national issue and therefore instead of going back out to advert, or recruiting contractors, we have made some minor structural changes by amalgamating the three Development Management teams into two. This allows us to maintain service consistency in the short term. Further, consideration will be given to recruitment and/or the structure later in the year.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The CIL funding applications are now open as of 1st March, and will close at 5pm on 1st May. Applications are encouraged for projects requesting between £10k and £100k – full criteria is available on our website:

[CIL funding applications | CIL funding applications | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk](#)

The next round of parish payments will be sent to relevant parish councils by 28th April, and work for the FY25/26 Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) will begin after close of accounts.

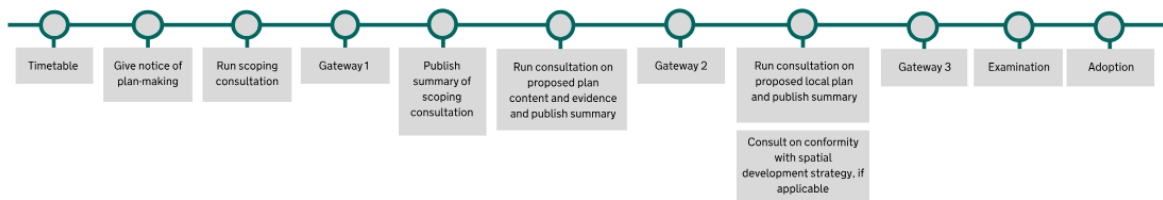
Local Plan

Government’s ambition is to achieve full coverage of up-to-date local plans across the country as soon as possible. The key regulations for the new plan-making system have been issued. This will enable local planning authorities to commence plan preparation from March 2026. This includes the new [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2026](#). This leads on from the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023 and they will replace the existing 2012 plan-making regulations. This effectively ‘turns on’ the new plan-making system.

It is anticipated that further regulations will follow on plan-making data standards, plan timetables, housing requirements, the later stages of the preparation process for local plans, and details of post-adoption monitoring requirements. To support the new system Government have published online guidance: [Create or Update a Local Plan](#).

The new plan-making system is radically different to the existing one. The diagram below illustrates the stages. The process must be completed within a 30-month timescale.

Tasks in local plan-making where the sequence is required by law



On the 15 January 2026 MHCLG (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) wrote to the Borough Council confirming that as we submitted a local plan for examination on, or before, 12 March 2025 and the housing requirement in plan as submitted for examination (and now adopted) was meeting less than 80% of the new local housing need, calculated using the standard method, that the Borough Council will therefore be required to start a local plan early in the new plan-making system. We must do this by publishing our notice to commence plan preparation by 30 June 2026 and publishing our Gateway 1 self-assessment by 31 October 2026. MHCLG have also been clear that plan-making should not stop or be paused due to local government reorganisation or devolution.

Work continues at pace to meet the new statutory timescales. Officers are engaging with MHCLG, the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), Planning Officer Society (POS), and other planning authorities in Norfolk on the new planning system. The Local Plan Task Group and the Planning Committee have been briefed on the new plan-making system and as part of the All-Member Briefing Sessions we'll be covering this on 26 May.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. [A new NPPF has been consulted on](#), and with thanks to Members of the Local Plan Task Group and Officers across a variety of departments we have submitted our representation on the new proposals. Government has stated that the final version is planned for publication in Summer 2026.

The key changes proposed include the introduction of national policies for decision making, as envisaged by the Levelling Up & Regeneration Act 2023. With these will be set at a national level they will remove the need, and the ability, for local plans to contain such policies. Existing development plan policies which are in any way inconsistent with the national decision-making policies in the new NPPF, once in place, should be given very limited weight.

Neighbourhood Planning Update

As of March 2026, there are 25 “made” (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans in place, covering 28 parishes. This includes, most recently:

- Marshland St James Neighbourhood Development Plan 2022-2038 – passed at referendum on 2nd October and subsequently “made” on 8th October 2025;
- Syderstone Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2038 – passed at referendum on 30th October and subsequently “made” on 10th November 2025; and
- The Walpoles Neighbourhood Plan 2022 – 2036 – passed at referendum on 13th November and subsequently “made” on 1st December 2025.

Two further Neighbourhood Plans are expected to come forward to referendum in the coming months. Details are set out below:

Neighbourhood plans that have reached submission stage (Regulation 15) and are expected to proceed to referendum during 2026-2027 financial year

	Current position
Docking Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2039	Submitted by Docking Parish Council for independent examination, 14 August 2025 . “Regulation 16” consultation, 29 September – 10 November 2025; examination early/ spring-2026; referendum/ adoption, summer 2026
Walpole Cross Keys Neighbourhood Plan Review 2022-2038	Re-submitted by Walpole Cross Keys Parish Council for independent examination, 26 August 2025 . “Regulation 16” consultation, 29 September – 10 November 2025; examination early/ spring-2026; referendum/ adoption, summer 2026

Other Emerging Neighbourhood Plans

	Current position
Dersingham	Neighbourhood Area first designated October 2017. During 2025-2026 moves to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan have been revived (since autumn 2025). Anticipated Regulation 14 consultation during 2026-2027.
Great Massingham	Neighbourhood Area first designated June 2021. During 2025-2026 moves to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan have been revived (since summer 2025). Anticipated Regulation 14 consultation during 2026-2027.
Ingoldisthorpe	Various draft evidence documents under preparation (e.g. Design Codes, Housing Needs Assessment) prepared, 2024-2025; anticipated Regulation 14 consultation during 2026-2027
Pentney	1 st draft Plan (Regulation 14) consultation March-May 2023, following which Plan has been significantly amended (e.g. due to adoption of Local Plan 2021-2040). Preliminary 1 st draft Plan and draft Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report signed off February 2026, allowing plan to proceed to Regulation 14. New Regulation 14 consultation anticipated spring/summer 2026; submission autumn 2026.
Shouldham	Preliminary 1 st draft Plan and draft Strategic Environmental Assessment/ Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report signed off October 2025, allowing plan to proceed to Regulation 14. Regulation 14 consultation anticipated spring/summer 2026; submission autumn 2026.
In addition, several other Parishes are designated Neighbourhood Areas, but progress with plan-making is unknown, or at an early stage	New Neighbourhood Plans: Burnham Overy; Outwell; Tilney St Lawrence; West Dereham Neighbourhood Plan reviews: Hunstanton; North Runcton & West Winch

Overall, it is anticipated that the Docking Neighbourhood Plan and Walpole Cross Keys Neighbourhood Plan review will come forward to referendum during summer 2026 (2026-2027 financial year). Other active emerging Neighbourhood Plans (Dersingham; Great Massingham; Ingoldisthorpe; Pentney; Shouldham) may come forward to referendum during the 2027-2028 financial year.

Despite financial support for developing Neighbourhood Plans, previously provided by Locality, having been withdrawn (reported to the Council on 31 July 2025), Neighbourhood

Plans continue to come forward. Withdrawal of Locality funding may impact the ability of some communities to progress their planning work, and alternative support mechanisms may need to be considered going forward. However, in the short-term Neighbourhood Planning remains popular, but the impact of withdrawal of Locality funding and / or changes to the National Planning Policy Framework upon future Neighbourhood Plan preparation and / or reviews in the medium / longer term, remains to be seen.

LICENSING

- The Tobacco and Vapes Bill has moved to the Final Stage (consideration of amendments) 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 , but this may change. This will have a big impact on workload and resouces if it is implemented as per the bill.
- We have completed the second round of inspections at all Gambling premises licensed within the borough. Premises includes - Adult Gaming Centres, Betting shops, Family Entertainment Centres, Bingo Premises and Gaming Machines in Pubs. We are also carrying out a review of gaming machines within licensed Club premises.
- Government has launched a consultation on a major overhaul of taxi and PHV licensing – ends 1 April 2026. Proposal to move taxi licensing regime from Local Authorities to Local Transport Authorities.
- A Taxi Drivers licence was suspended for one month by Members of the Licensing & Appeals Panel in February and another was suspended pending evidence of medical fitness to drive. No further information can be provided due to the confidential nature of information.
- We have received our first application to licence two primates within the borough. Those primates also require a Dangerous Wild Animals licence.

Cabinet Members Report to Council

26th March 2026

Councillor Sandra Squire – Cabinet Member for Environment & Coastal

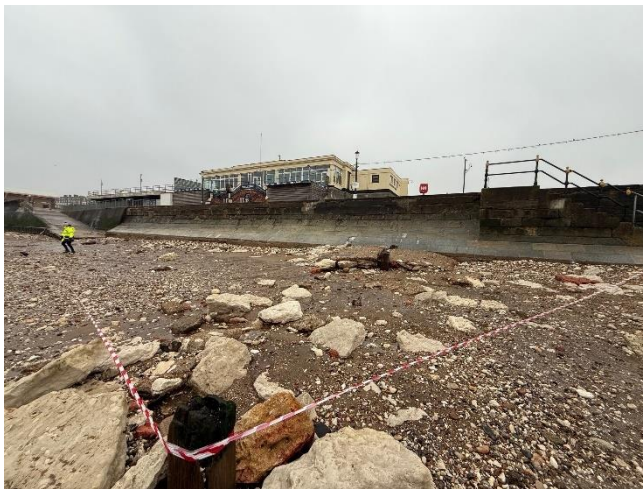
Report to Council for the period 29th January 2026 to 26th March 2026

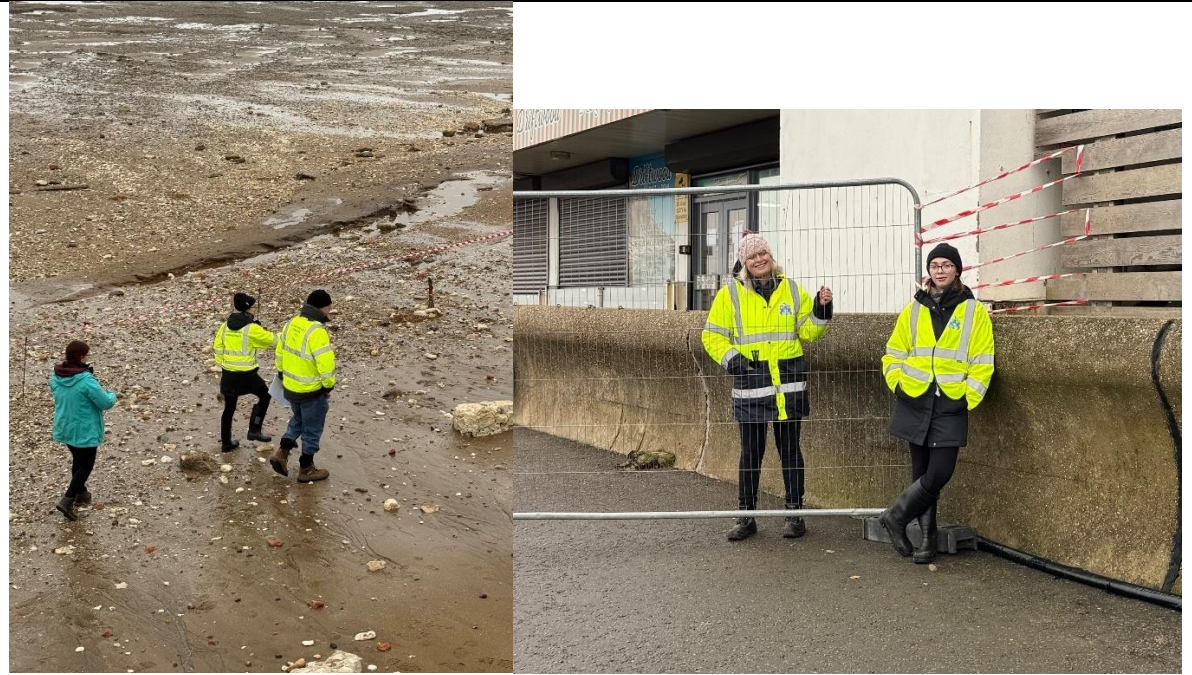
1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

Hunstanton Prom

On the morning of 5th February, the call came to say that a hole had appeared overnight in the prom revealing a void underneath. That fired the starting gun of a period of intense work and investigations by not just our Flood & Coastal team, but the wider council, our partner agencies and contractors.

I spent that day with the team on the prom, my overriding memories are that it was absolutely freezing and the wind was biting. That did not hinder the absolute professionalism of the whole team. Once again I am in awe of how our staff come together to react and deal with a situation. It is now a year since the nurdle incident and once again we find ourselves on the beach. The following pictures are ones that I took that day.





I'm sure you will all join me in thanking our flood and coast officers and environmental health officers who spent the day on the prom, arranging further investigations and making it safe for the public. Thanks must also go to the public open space team and the Alive staff who arranged the fencing, taped off the beach repeatedly with every tide, cleared debris from the beach and provided hot drinks to those working outside. Also to the Environment Agency and our contractor Balfour Beatty who were onsite as soon as possible on the day.

Thanks also to the comms team for keeping everyone updated and providing pictures and videos. Even if we will never live down the now infamous "the council are looking into it" hole pictures!

So many people all played a part, I'm bound to forget someone but I'm aware so many staff from different departments have been involved. Thank you to everyone. It was an especially bleak day, made even more so by the addition of the stark fencing and keep out signs.



So its nice to be able to report that today (16th March), the hole has been filled and the construction compound will be removed over the next couple of days. The prom will remain closed until we are assured that it is safe to reopen it. I can't guarantee that it will be open for Easter but I am hopeful. We are informed that the concrete requires 28 days to fully harden, so we will assess what we can and can't reopen over that period. (Staff photo below)



The works have been more complicated than I think many people realise. It wasn't a case of just pouring concrete in a hole until it was full.

Firstly the prom had to be surveyed and cored to ascertain the extent of the void underneath, then the front wall had to be sheet piled to stabilise the prom and

ensure that concrete couldn't essentially flow out underneath where beach levels had dropped. Any gaps in the blockwork also needed to be filled.

Finally the concrete with an additive to make it set faster, had to be poured in sections. This has taken several days but is now complete.

Going forward the weight limit for the prom will be reviewed, the bins on the prom will only be uncovered when they can be emptied, new smaller bins may be required depending on the access arrangements for emptying them.

We knew that major works on the prom were going to be required in the near future from the technical report we revealed last year. Beach levels dropped far faster than we anticipated, however that was a situation that had been identified as a potential issue. We are dealing the nature at its most powerful and we can't change coastal processes, the wind or the tides. We have to plan and deal with whatever situation we find ourselves in and our staff managed that brilliantly as usual.

Beach levels and the prom are monitored regularly and will continue to be as we head towards the major capital works.

The hole and the debris on the beach became a tourist attraction in their own right. Glass bottles and ceramics dated from the time of the prom construction have been found by council staff and the many beach combers who not only gained souvenirs but also effectively helped with the beach clean up.



Obviously keeping the area of the hole and the beach immediately in front of it secure, was a priority to keep everyone safe.

Waste & Fly Tipping:

Two Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued in the last couple of months. The level of activity has not been as high as normally expected due to reduced resources over the last few months. This is under review and hopefully we will be back to full strength soon.

1. Fly tip with evidence on Syderstone Road which led back to Reffley Lane in Kings Lynn. When interviewed about it the householder admitted that she had cleared her daughters room out as they were upgrading it and left all the rubbish by the side of the house. She intended to get someone to take it away, however a white van stopped and asked her if she needed help taking the rubbish away. She thought "well that is convenient" and paid him £120 plus an extra £10 for a double bed that she was getting rid of in a couple of weeks that bed is still there as he didn't come back !

No waste carriers license was checked and the rubbish was fly tipped. Therefore for failure to comply with the Householder's Duty of Care, a Fixed Penalty Notice was issued for £200 which was paid within the hour of receiving it.

2. Fly tip reported from the Allotment team stating one of the allotments had a fire in their shed, then removed all the burnt wood and roofing and left it outside Gaywood allotments. His excuse was "someone told him it was OK to put it there". He received a FPN plus the risk that he would have his allotment agreement terminated.

It was resolved by him paying a FPN of £200 on the same day and an agreement that if he cleared his rubbish up, he would be able to keep his allotment plot, which he did.

Warning letters:

Warning letters sent out to three homes in North End where they had put rubbish in the alleyway, it was returned to their property and a warning letter was posted asking them to dispose of the items in the correct manner otherwise they would be issued with Fixed Penalty Notices. We believe this is an exchange of tenants in each case.

The Mayors Business Awards

It is always an honour to attend the Mayors Business Awards and hear about so many of our local businesses and help celebrate their successes and especially to help celebrate the Environmental Champion Award.

This year, Cllr de Whalley and I had a little something extra for the award winners. Not just a food waste caddy and leaflet to help remind all of our local businesses that if they have more than 10 full time employees they need to comply with the simpler recycling legislation by providing separate dry recycling, food waste and residual waste collections, also that we can assist them in providing a commercial recycling service. I will take literally every opportunity to promote our service!

They were also provided with an acorn vase and one acorn for a living reminder of their award win. The acorns can be germinated and grown in the vase and brought back to us in a year's time so that we can find somewhere to plant the oak

saplings, which will have a plaque to say which business grew it. We have asked winners to regularly take photographs of their saplings and tag in the council on social media with the hashtag #WestNorfolkGrowingTheFuture. I can't wait to see all the pictures of the baby trees!

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

Fly Tipping Investigation and Enforcement:

I am greatly saddened by the news that cases of fly tipping have risen across the country. We are not immune to this, the local increase is disappointing and frankly infuriating.

The vast majority of our residents dispose of their waste appropriately and want to live in a clean and tidy Borough. Sadly there are people who think they can get away with dumping their waste wherever they like, expecting other people to clear up after them, blighting our towns, villages and countryside and for council tax payers to have to pick up the cost.

The Government through DEFRA have issued new guidance and supporting case studies of powers available to deal with Fly Tipping from vehicles.

The guidance states: ***'Councils also have powers to search and seize vehicles of suspected fly-tippers. This document aims to support local authorities when carrying out the power to seize vehicles suspected of being involved in waste crime. This is in addition to the powers to prosecute or issue Fixed Penalty Notices.'***

The Government will publish a Waste Crime Action Plan, we await its publication to help further refine our approach to fly tipping. It has already been flagged that the Plan will include the imposition of Penalty Points on drivers who are found guilty of offences and use a vehicle to fly tip.

So to clarify – we intend to use every available avenue open to us to catch people guilty of fly tipping offences. Including new staff, the use of camera evidence and seizure of vehicles. I also plan to raise the amount we fine perpetrators, this will have to be a full council decision and I hope that when this item comes to council, that you will all support it.

So to those that do fly tip, and those thinking of doing so, the message is clear – Think again. Enough is enough - we are coming for you.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Various Portfolio Briefings
Cabinet briefing

Cabinet

Joint Waste Contract review and development board

NEWS Board meeting

Hunstanton Coastal Defence briefing

Joint KLWNBC/Breckland Cabinet meeting

LGA Coastal SIG meetings

LGA Coastal SIG water quality discussion

Meeting with Chief Exec & Council Leader

Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape Forum

Several visits to the Prom

Mayors Business Awards

Visits to the Depot

Cabinet sifting

Hunstanton Sea Defence Student meeting

RFCC Member Learning session

North West Norfolk Catchment Partnership Meeting

Wash East Coast Management Strategy Stakeholder Forum

LGA Coastal SIG water quality working group

Cabinet Members Report to Council

26 March 2026

Councillor Chris Morley – Cabinet Member for Finance

Report to Council for the period 20th January 2026 to 16th March 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

I have already reported on the backlog of Local Government accounts since Covid and that we are currently in a 5 year programme to clear, fully, local audits and build back assurance that our Statements are accurate. This process is due to complete by 2027/8 accounts with a backstop for external audit opinions by 30/11/28.

In years prior to that, we have been and are receiving, “disclaimed” opinions. This disclaimer primarily relates to the brought and carried forward figures since the Covid period.

The process for completing the programme will therefore entail extra finance activity to demonstrate that our Balance Sheets are sound in addition to business as usual. But, business will not be as usual towards the end of the programme of audit assurance as we will have (if plans go without turning) LGR to contend with and any precursor activities to the Devolution intent for Norfolk and Suffolk.

We will have to devise a realistic forward programme with our external auditors EY so as to comply with the Government’s intentions and assess the resource implications.

Although no solution as yet, the Government recognises that there are significant fault lines in Local Government accounting, in particular with:

Capacity – there is a severe lack of auditors with experience of local government accounting and a limited number of audit companies; and

Complexity – financial reporting requirements are disproportionately complex (to which any Member on Audit Committee will attest).

The Government therefore has developed a strategy to introduce, amongst other measures:

- A new Government National Audit Office,
- Simplified and proportional reporting, and
- Securing enhanced capacity and capability.

Key elements are included in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act which was amended in The Grand Committee on 3rd March and proceeds onwards.

Meanwhile, our 2024/25 Accounts have secured a disclaimed report and signed and the corresponding Annual Governance Statement has been endorsed.

We are working on 2025/2026 figures to deliver the Statements to the external auditors by end June with the objective of sign off by end September.

BUDGET 25/26

The Q3 budget monitoring reports are available for CPP and wider publication. The revenue figures are very much as presented to full Council on 26th February. However, there are some further efficiency savings being reported and higher revenue returns from Service Divisions – such as Planning Development Control. All together we are now forecasting an increase to the General Fund, providing a reserve closer to £600k as opposed to the £383k reported at full Council.

BUDGET 26/27

The Council tax resolution was agreed by full Council last month which set a Council tax, for a Band D property at £157.44. As Members know, this tax only represents 7% of the Demand placed on our residents and I thought it may prove useful to remind all of the full tax that needs to be paid.

At Band D (I have used Bircham in the example, but the Precept and Special Expenses are much larger elsewhere, and can be found in the February Agenda papers)

Precept	£71.75 (+0%)
Special Expenses	£0.93
Council Tax	£157.44 (+2.99%)
County Tax	£1843.38 (+4.99%)
Police	£344.79 (+4.53%)
TOTAL	£2418.29.

The Council has agreed that a premium of 100% will apply to second homes and although there is some churn, the total number of premiums being paid is increasing.

I cannot write about our budget position without mentioning the IDB levies. These total £3.871m against a Grant of £499k. Although we will keep lobbying Ministers, we have no forecast or promise of support for years 27-29 but are hopeful that the review of IDB costs by Consultants on behalf of DEFRA will provide an equitable resolution to the costs incurred by these much and increasingly needed drainage operations.

This year's financial settlement from the Government was the first of a 3 year offering. Years 2 and 3 have yet to be fully defined but I trust that changes to the initial figures, thankfully favourable, will not be offered as late in the day as this year. Our Finance team had to decipher the offers, which, essentially gave the Government more Business Rates than before, but supplemented our support with Grants for specific purposes. Check with advisors that our understanding was correct (as far as could be ascertained from the Government Statements), revise the figures from those reported earlier and brief Panel Members at a special meeting (s) and all Members via Teams/YouTube. This left little time for rigorous scrutiny, but we may be in a similar situation 1 year from now. If this turns out to be the case, I trust all Members will give sufficient scrutiny for their individual purposes in the time available.

Although receipt of Business Rates, Council Tax and Grants are important to our cost structure, the bulk of our revenue contribution is receipts from our services. Non Statutory charges have risen within CPI+1% (4.1% for this budget) . This is a charge which fully recovers the cost and overhead of provision and is charged to

those who use the service as opposed to recovering our costs through the council tax paid by all residents, irrespective of whether they use the service. Receipts from the fees we charge for using our services contribute 67% to our costs, Business Rates 18%, Council Tax 11% and Revenue Grants 4%.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

Our priority is to borrow on a short term basis but Members will know that there are 2 loans with Barclays totalling £10m, taken out, for whatever reason, in 2007 on a long term repayment basis of 70 years. This has been, to say the least, an irritant in recent years. Following authority from the Council, we have renegotiated the closure of the Loan and before the Council meet, we should be able to report that the Loan is settled on favourable terms.

On a general view, our net loan position is well within the Prudential Indicators for capital investment, these indicators provide a framework to ensure our borrowing decisions are prudent, affordable and sustainable; and we have the assurance, under that framework, that they are.

As I mentioned at Council, there is the likelihood that we may need to support further our cash flow through the year. As a precaution we have made due allowance for any increase in interest repayments in our 26/27 revenue budget.

ICT

We have refocussed our priorities to cyber security, network resilience, readiness for transformation and use of AI.

Latest initiatives are:

Cybersecurity Enhancements

The Huntress Security Operations Centre (SOC) and endpoint monitoring has now fully embedded, and we have already seen improved visibility of suspicious activity on endpoints and servers. Several low-level behavioural anomalies have been flagged and triaged quickly, demonstrating the value of 24/7 oversight.

Microsoft E5 Security Features

Preparatory work has also been completed for the next phase of our Microsoft E5 security rollout, identifying the first areas of implementation. This supports our shift toward a Zero Trust model over 2026.

Backup and Disaster Recovery Improvements

Work is progressing on the move from our current backup system (TSM) to Veeam. We are currently evaluating replacement hardware options for Kings Court and our DR site at Fakenham which is needed to support the Veeam migration. The current costings are reflecting significant market price increases compared with the early estimates from December 2025.

New Projects

Two projects have received full approval to proceed, reflecting their clear alignment with our organisational priorities.

1. To proceed with Phase 1 of the CCTV control room replacement which involves upgrading the Network Video Recorders (NVRs). This is due to the

ageing condition of the current infrastructure, operational risks associated with failure, and the need to modernise equipment for this highly prized service.

2. The second project is the use of Artificial Intelligence to support the Local Plan site assessment and consultation processes. This will significantly speed up the assessment process, improve consistency, and reduce manual workload for the call for sites. The project is a strong early example of responsible AI deployment within the Council.

Windows 11 Rollout and Teams Premiums

The rollout of Windows 11 continues with HR now completed and further departments scheduled for March/April. Training materials have been updated and improved following initial staff feedback and a new project area has been created on the intranet to help support staff in the transition from Windows 10 to Windows 11.

The rollout of Teams Premium to users across the council will also be starting imminently. This upgrade will add AI features to help with meeting management and action point tracking, and support more effective and efficient collaboration across service areas.

PROCUREMENT

We have supplemented our resource to work on identifying and analysing non-compliant spend across the Council.

We have a member of the Local Government East Talent Bank, is working with us for an initial eight weeks to review how we calculate the percentage of compliant spend. Once the non-compliant supply arrangements have been identified, we will be working on assessing risk and then leading on appropriate procurement exercises to ensure all officers understand the need for good governance and are fully conversant with Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Act 2023.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

Whatever is needed to respond to events, financial and otherwise,

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

I attend Portfolio meetings.

Cabinet briefing and sifting together with cabinet itself.

CPP and Audit Panels.

IDB lobby meetings.

As many Ward Parish Councils as I can

Significant analysis and reading relating to all matters to improve the performance of this Council and with ad hoc meetings with officers.

Members Report to Council

16th January 2026

Councillor – Jo Rust Cabinet Member for – People and Communities

For the period - 14th January – 16th March 2026

Progress on Portfolio Matters. –

Creating Communities

There's often a strong focus on our urban communities and our rural communities are left with an impression that their residents are less important, which is, of course, not true. So, I was pleased to take part in a Rural Communities Grant Panel where decision were made about which rural communities would benefit from the fund. The fund successful application had to demonstrate how they provided some new and not merely a like for like replacement and how it contributed towards building their community and what gap it might fill. Sports for women and girls were a part of the focus for some bids – the men and boys' element having been covered for many years. As were accessibility to widen participation. Providing facilities to enable rural residents to get out, active and socialising were also popular. The applications were well written and I'm grateful to have been able to take part and help decide which would be the successful bids and know that they were going to help improve lives for those in the rural communities and their visitors.

I attended some really interesting and thought-provoking training at the end of January which was called Communicating for Cohesion. It looked at the breakdown in expression over how we talk about people who weren't born in our country and trying to understand why those who use unkind references might do that. As well as understanding why for some, erecting flags on lampposts was considered the right thing to do. There were no simple or straightforward answers, but it was useful to give greater consideration to the views of those who one might not agree with. For me, and my learning style, I missed not being able to take notes! It was a very interactive session, designed to get us up and moving and using post it notes to capture our thoughts, which left me no opportunity to write them down for me to refer back to!

We held a joint away day with the cabinet and exec team of Breckland council. If we do succeed in being granted a three unitary model, we'll be working together to create a new community across the districts and so this was a much needed gathering. While their cabinet is less independent minded than ours I got the strong impression that their focus is the same – in

getting the very best results for their residents regardless of what model we have.

Food for thought has been commissioned by the Hanseatic Union to run a series of courses for the migrant community in our area. I attended one session at the Beacon Church which was well attended and well received. This really helps to bring people together over food and builds community cohesion. Later that evening I attended a service to commemorate the anniversary of the start of the war in Ukraine and saw some of the same people in attendance.

Partnerships with Health

We received an update from the North West Anglia Acute Hospitals Trust exec – Micheel Arrowsmith and Lesley Dwyer. Unfortunately, we know now that the QEH will enter the National Provider Improvement Programme to help structure the improvement and support programme for the most challenged trusts. Escalation was expected given the scale and the duration of the QEH's operational and governance challenges. In addition to this, the maternity and neonatal department have been reviewed, and the interim report reflects the national themes. The full report is due in Spring 2026. The staff survey will be released on the 12th March and the expectation is that the results will be poor.

Housing and Homelessness

I attended an online event called Homes and Health. We already know the link between poor quality housing and poor health and that declining health and health inequality is an existential threat to the NHS. It's in part, for these reasons that our area took the step to become a Marmot place to try to address this. I learnt that the proportion of households in non-decent homes is higher in poorer areas, but surely that would come as no surprise to anyone. Private renters are more likely to live in non-decent homes, which is why building our own stock of homes for the PRS is so important, because those that we've built in partnership with Lovells are of a very high standard and will enable our residents to have a better quality of life. Our housing system was built to be inherently racist and this now means that people from a minority group are more likely to live in poorer housing and thus have more hospital admissions. 15 million people in the UK live in home with damp and mould and 80% of older owner occupiers live in non-decent homes. Only 8% of older owner occupiers have adaptations, which highlights the importance of the work that our care and repair team undertake for residents. This can make a difference between one of our residents living comfortably and in good health independently or being forced to go into care. Decent homes have been shown to save the NHS £780 million a year. So, the more our own council can do in this regard, the more our residents and our struggling QEH will reap rewards. It was observed that too few new builds are built to the M4(2) Category 2 (Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings) standard. This standard for new builds requires features that allow for easy, long-term adaptation for people with reduced mobility. They include step-free access, 850mm minimum door widths, reinforced bathroom walls for wall grab rails

and wheelchair accessible, entrance levels. Currently just ¼ of new homes have been built to that standard. It reinforces the need for us to work in partnership with the developers in our area and bring pressure to bear on them to get it right. But as it'll add extra costs, and developers run on making money, it's not easy. This makes our positive working relationship with Lovells, even more important.

The average asking price for homes in the east of England now stands at £371,699 and only 99 properties available to let are affordable at LHA.

I attended an LGA round table event on getting ready for bids for the social and affordable homes programme which provided information about the £27.3 billion allocated to Homes England over a 10-year programme to deliver 300,000 homes across the country. 60% of these homes will be for social rent tackling the needs for a continued mixed tenure approach. The programme has 2 national priorities – to maximise the delivery of social and affordable homes in order to support the gov'n's commitment of 1.5 million homes over this parliament and to maximise the delivery of social rent with at least 70% of the homes. This programme will hopefully support our own local aims to eradicate homelessness. While we can build homes at pace, we also need to ensure that we get the design right so that homes which are built now are fit to use in 30 years' time – referring back to earlier in my report about needing more M4(2) category house that can be adapted for the needs of elderly residents. It was also acknowledged that sometimes social rents aren't actually affordable at the LHA rate because they're 80% of the market rate for rent.

Housing Standards

Our housing standards team are currently assessing the impact that the Renter's Rights Act will have on them and how many new burdens it will bring with it. This Act is designed to improve the situation for those in the PRS, which ties directly into the work we're doing around Marmot. While we always need and want to work positively with landlords to support them to improve below parr properties, we can prosecute and even enforce sale if need be. Introducing a Tenancy Relations Officer is important for both Housing Standards and Housing Options. There can be a considerable amount of work needed when undertaking inspections, whether that's for homes for the PRS or renewing HMO licences or for those applying for the first time. Housing Standards are the only housing team which undertake enforcement. The HS team delivered some training for us all as it's inevitable that we will be contacted by residents who are affected by the Act, whether they're tenants or landlords.

Beat Your Bills

Anglian Water gave councillors a briefing on the customer service line of work that they offer to vulnerable customers and how they can help and support them; either with financial struggles to pay their bills or the practical side of the service. There are discounted tariffs, assistance schemes and affordable payment plans available if people are finding it difficult to pay. There are also free priority services register which means AW can provide free practical

support such as help if your water goes off, bills in different formats, language preferences noted and used and help to nominate someone to manage your account. Please let your residents know and go to anglianwater.co.uk/priority or call on 0800 232 1951 or whatsapp on 01522 341 343.

I have been to several, very well attended, Beat Your Bills sessions where the local residents expressed their appreciation of the information that they were given. All these is designed to assist our residents with managing their finances, remain in their own homes, and stay warm and healthy. The sessions have been held in a variety of different village locations including East Winch, Feltwell and Bridge for Heroes.

Assets of Community Value and Bus Shelters

Nothing to report

Healthier Lives strategy

I link our recent tour with the STARS team with healthier lives because this is about sustainable transport and regeneration to encourage more people to walk and cycle into town and to achieve net zero goals by 2030. By creating better and more direct links for pedestrians and cyclists the hope is to improve the environment for them making it easier to walk or bike. Encouraging people out of their cars will be hard, but we all know it needs to be done, well, you do if you ever get stuck in one of our frequent gridlocked traffic jams. This will also reduce the carbon emissions blighting our atmosphere. It's been proven that doing more physical activity of any sort and enjoying better air quality sees us less likely to need to use the NHS so there's less stress on the system. I'm a long-standing cyclist but this winter I've been using my car for more frequently. Now spring is on the way I look forward to going back to my bike.

I attended an online event called Introduction to Systems Leadership. It sounds very dry but essentially looked at how we can change the current system that we operate under to encourage more people to get up and to be active in any way, shape or form because currently 30% of adults are inactive. 10% of adults in Breckland live in 20% of the most deprived communities, meaning that doing things differently is vital to improve the life chances of our communities. For years we've been investing in physical activity, but nothing has changed, so we've wasted millions of pounds. Another reason we need to operate a different type of system. We're working with stubborn inequalities that affect the least active areas in our communities. We need to create the conditions that will enable things to change by understanding and considering all the layers or factors that affect the situation we're hoping to influence. Locally, we've got LGR, a new QEH on the horizon (as distant as that might seem right now) an amazing new library (which some residents are getting inexplicably angry and irate about!) and residents blame "the council" for everything. We also have poverty, climate change, polarisation, town centre decline (although we've got a plan to help reverse that!) and some people are getting richer while the poor are getting poorer.

Rather than looking at the government and their decisions, we're blaming others for the problems – effectively punching down. To make changes we need to consider who it is that our communities trust, what's happening in my area right now and what does it feel like. We know that there are layers in a system – the individual, their social environment, organisations and institutions, the physical environment, policies and then the outer layers are focused on cultural norms and ideologies. These all shape what we do and how we access things like physical activity and even, if we want to! For example, while we, an organisation, want people to use buses – public transport, not every bus stop has a bus shelter. If we provided more bus shelters (we're working on it with BSIP money) and better timetable information (we now use QR codes for those who have phones) we might change the underuse of buses. Even better would be to offer free bus passes or reduced bus fares. Following on from this training I also attended a Life Course Approach to Tackling Inequality. We know that this is a significant issue in our area, with those in North Wootton living 10 years more than their neighbours in North Lynn. We also know that women have lower levels of physical activity than men, with many dropping out of formal sports in their teenage years and then not taking it up again due to periods, childbirth, childcare, then menopause. We discussed the need for health visitors to discuss the physical activity needs of Mother's and not solely focus on the health of the newborn. If that interaction was changed maybe mothers would feel encouraged to do some activity. In a Lancashire job centre the staff changed to interaction. The layout was redesigned, making tea and coffee available for claimants and reducing the form filling. The focus moved to wellbeing, and they did walking coach sessions. It improved the wellbeing of the job seekers and fewer people became long term unemployed as a result. In another area they establish an active Madrassah and embedded physical activity into the curriculum enabling 10,000 children to become active. These examples demonstrate that by changing our approach – not doing what we've always done in the way we've always done it, produces different results. I'm confident that our area can also adopt a different approach, so we no longer waste millions of pounds on unsuccessful activity programmes. If you have ideas for new approaches which support the specific needs of your communities, please let me know.

Youth

I attended an event at the Corn Exchange hosted by the DWP to showcase all the apprenticeship, learning and training opportunities that there are in our community for young adults. It was attended by over 800 people and there were over 50 stalls showing business and organisations and what they have to offer. The event had a real buzz and the people looking for those opportunities gave such positive feedback on the event. I know that Sam and Hayley from the DWP put in so much effort, supported by other team members and those participating organisations. This all helps to increase aspiration by providing information about chance that they didn't know about.

I attended a scooter event at Lynnsport, where YouTube sensation Spanner, showed of this scootering skills. The place was packed full of young people on their own scooters homing in their own talents and skills. It was genuinely an amazing event with over 400 young people, along with their parents, present. The young people were using huge amounts of energy on their tricks and it demonstrates that if you can find the right interest, physical activity is for everyone.

Safeguarding

While our White Ribbon accreditation doesn't sit fully under safeguarding, it is one of the steps our council is taking to ensure that our staff and our residents can live free from fear of domestic abuse and violence. We are introducing more training, toolkits and programme to support eradicating this and it's far more than merely wearing the pin on our lanyards. Suffice to say our organisation is actively looking to strengthen the action we're taking regarding this.

Customer relations and CIC

It was good to see and to take part in the launch of our values and behaviours, following some training recently. This was launched at the staff conference with staff and elected members being able to participate in what our behaviours should now look like following on from agreement over what our values are. This will help further strengthen our internal working relationships and enable us to deliver better services to our residents, which is that whole purpose of what we do.

The CIC team gave us an excellent briefing before full council at the end of January. We could clearly see how some of our systems make accessing information or services so much harder for our residents. And some of it is absolutely unnecessary.

I attended some scrutiny training in March. We have a further session n booked for April 2nd and I urge you all to attend. Thew fist session was so well delivered and incredibly clear that it really helped me focus on why effective scrutiny is a fundamental part of what we do. We all want to drive improvement in public services and impactful recommendation that will shape what we do to the benefit of our communities and residents are the way to do this.

Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

RISE update
Health and Wellbeing Partnership meeting
KLAC
Active Norfolk Meeting

Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Portfolio briefings – Health and Wellbeing

Portfolio Briefings – CIC
Portfolio Briefing - Housing
Full Council
Lynnsport Kaset event with YouTube sensation - Spanner
Health and wellbeing partnership meetings (monthly)
E&C
Freebridge briefing
Communicating for Cohesion & follow up meeting online
Joint Group Meetings
Cabinet/special cabinet/cabinet sifting/Cabinet Briefings
Food for Thought
Homelessness and housing delivery briefing
ICB at NCC
ICS District Meeting
ICS Conference
KLAC
West Norfolk Community Transport meeting
Health and Wellbeing Board event
Housing standards and ASB portfolio meeting
Leisure facilities meeting
LGA training - various
Planning Training
West Norfolk Community Transport
Raising Skills and Aspirations
CIL Briefing
Values and Behaviours briefing
Active Norfolk
QEH management meeting
Apprenticeship event planning meeting
PMO briefing.
Transformation Board
Launch of Five Dinners
Rural Communities Grants Panel
Homes and Health Briefing
Tours of Stars
Budget Scrutiny Training
Scrutiny Training
CMR – meeting and school performance
Staff conference
Staff awards ceremony
All member briefing from Anglian Water
KLCF
YAB meeting
Tour of new Library
Mayor's Award Evening
Housing delivery strategy meeting
North Lynn boxing club visit
Carer's Voice
QEH briefing
Beat Your Bills

Ground-breaking ceremony
Housing Standards training on the RRA
Renter's Rights briefing
Joint Cabinet away day
Audit
Planning Training
LGA roundtable SAHP

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

26th March 2026

COUNCILLOR SIMON RING - CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS, PROPERTY AND LEISURE

For the period 21st January-16th March 2026

Leisure

In this report I wish to start to socialize the social values of the work we do in the leisure space. Too often we simply look at the financial revenue position. This is wrong for a Council that has a much wider objective than a commercial 'profit' motive. Yes, we still should seek to try to make the finances add up, but there is much more to it than that. I hope this report helps this understanding.

The current year has marked a significant evolution in how the Borough's leisure and cultural services are delivered. Increasingly, these services are being understood not simply as operational facilities, but as critical elements of the Borough's social infrastructure.

Over the past year the service has moved towards a more integrated, community-led model. This model recognises that leisure and culture play a fundamental role in delivering the Council's broader priorities around health, wellbeing, community resilience, and social capital.

While financial sustainability remains important, it is vital that Members recognise that the Borough's leisure and cultural offer carries responsibilities that extend far beyond the purely commercial. These services are designed not simply to generate revenue but to improve the health of residents, tackle social isolation, widen access to sport and culture, and support communities across the Borough.

This distinction is particularly important in the context of wider Local Government Reorganisation discussions. The Borough's in-house model demonstrates how publicly owned leisure and culture provision can deliver measurable social outcomes alongside operational sustainability, something that purely commercial operators are rarely positioned to achieve.

Overall Participation

The scale of community engagement continues to grow.
Year to date (January 2026), leisure and cultural services have delivered:
1,251,840 attendances

This figure reflects not only traditional leisure use, but also the growing role of our sites as community hubs delivering health interventions, wellbeing programmes, cultural access, and social connection.

Expanding Social Impact Through Innovation

The most striking example of the Borough's social impact approach is the continued expansion of Kaset.

Attendance figures demonstrate extraordinary growth:

Previous full financial year: 8,717 attendances

Year to January 2026: 10,585 attendances (February and March still to be added)
Kaset has proven particularly successful in engaging hard-to-reach demographics, including younger residents and those from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The programme has created a positive environment that builds community pride, encourages participation in physical activity, provides constructive outlets for young people, and helps reduce anti-social behaviour.

This approach has been recognised externally. A recent visit from Sport England and Active Norfolk highlighted the programme's strong community focus and its alignment with the Borough Council's wider work on health inequalities, Marmot principles, and place-based health improvement.

While the social benefits are the programme's primary value, it is notable that Kaset also exceeded financial expectations, with January income 96% above budget, enabling continued subsidised access for community sessions.

Tackling Social Isolation and Supporting Active Ageing

Responding to national participation trends, the Borough introduced Pickleball at Lynnsport and other sites.

This activity has seen rapid uptake, particularly among residents aged over 50. Pickleball's appeal lies in its accessibility, offering low-impact exercise, social interaction and inclusive participation regardless of prior sporting experience. In a rural Borough where social isolation remains a challenge for many residents, particularly older residents, programmes such as this play a significant role in maintaining physical health while strengthening social connections.

Innovation in Health and Rehabilitation

The Borough continues to explore innovative approaches to health improvement through leisure facilities.

Recent initiatives include:

Virtual Hydrohex – water-based digital coaching programmes delivered in swimming pools, enabling structured exercise programmes without requiring additional staffing.#

Good Boost – an NHS-approved AI-supported rehabilitation programme delivering personalised aquatic exercise for residents with musculoskeletal conditions.

Virtual Les Mills Classes – digital group fitness sessions that increase facility utilisation while also offering lower-cost class options.

At the Oasis site in Hunstanton alone, these programmes have resulted in more than

900 additional attendances since January 2026.

Leisure Centres as Community Wellbeing Hubs

Across the Borough, leisure sites are increasingly acting as holistic wellbeing centres rather than traditional sports venues.

Successful programmes include Sit to Fit sessions designed for residents with limited mobility and Ride United adapted cycling sessions providing inclusive opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

These programmes highlight how leisure facilities contribute directly to the Council's work on health inequalities and inclusive participation.

Supporting Physical and Mental Health

Partnership working continues to expand the Borough's ability to support residents. In partnership with The Big C, specialist exercise programmes are now delivered for residents recovering from cancer treatment, led by Level 4 qualified instructors.

Mental health initiatives such as Time to Talk Football, delivered with the 8:56 Foundation, use sport to break down barriers and encourage open conversation among men about mental health challenges.

With staff trained in Mental Health First Aid, leisure centres are becoming safe and supportive spaces where residents can access both physical activity and emotional support.

Supporting Women's and Girls' Sport

Participation among women and girls remains a key priority.

A significant recent development has been the relocation of the West Norfolk Netball League to Lynnsport, providing a high-quality venue for competitive netball and strengthening opportunities for female participation in sport across the Borough.

Bringing Health Services into Leisure Facilities

At Downham Market, an unused school changing facility has been converted into a Community Meeting and Health Room.

This space now hosts NHS clinics and community groups, bringing healthcare provision directly into a leisure environment and strengthening partnership working to support preventative health.

Cultural Services and Community Engagement

The Borough's cultural venues continue to deliver significant social value.

The Corn Exchange pantomime achieved record attendance of 23,000 visitors this year, the highest in the venue's history.

This included thousands of local school children experiencing live theatre for the first time.

Accessible performances such as Autism Friendly and Dementia Friendly shows

ensure that cultural access remains inclusive for all residents.

Heritage and Education

Stories of Lynn and the Town Hall continue to strengthen their educational impact. More than 1,300 school children have visited Stories of Lynn this year to learn about the Borough's heritage, strengthening civic pride and local identity.

Workforce Development and Skills

Leisure services are also delivering social value through employment and skills development.

Teams at St James and Oasis now deliver in-house Swimming Teacher qualifications, NPLQ Lifeguard training and Pool Plant technical qualifications.

This creates local career pathways while reducing recruitment costs and building a homegrown workforce.

Future plans include expanding apprenticeship opportunities in partnership with local education providers, particularly within the cultural sector.

Strategic Investment in Lynnsport

Work is progressing on the next phase of development at Lynnsport.

This includes feasibility work for a new 8-lane 25m swimming pool to replace the ageing St James facility, a town centre wellness provision pilot to maintain equitable access, and feasibility work on expanding accessible sport provision including padel. These developments will strengthen Lynnsport's role as a regional hub for sport, health and community wellbeing.

Digital Transformation

The new leisure and culture website launched at the start of 2026, with a mobile app scheduled to launch shortly.

These platforms will enable more bookings to be made digitally, allowing staff to focus on higher-value customer interaction and community outreach.

The Value of a Publicly Led Leisure and Culture Service

It is important for Members to recognise that the achievements outlined in this report are the outcome of a deliberate policy choice by the Borough Council to deliver leisure and culture services with social outcomes at their core.

Across the country many councils have outsourced leisure provision to commercial operators. Those arrangements can deliver efficiencies but are fundamentally designed around financial performance rather than wider community impact.

By retaining a direct role in shaping the service, the Council is able to prioritise outcomes such as preventative health programmes, youth engagement, disability sport provision, tackling social isolation and ensuring equitable access across the Borough.

These outcomes reflect the broader responsibilities of local government and demonstrate the unique value of a publicly led leisure and cultural service.

Leisure and Culture: Core Public Services, Not Optional Extras

Leisure and cultural services are sometimes viewed as discretionary activities. Evidence increasingly demonstrates the opposite.

Physical inactivity, loneliness and poor mental health place significant pressure on public services. Leisure and culture play a key role in preventative health.

Every swimming lesson delivered, every adapted cycling session offered, every community fitness class attended and every cultural event experienced contributes to healthier residents, stronger communities and greater civic pride.

For many residents, leisure centres, theatres and heritage venues represent their first opportunity to connect with their community, improve their wellbeing or experience culture.

Recognising leisure and culture as core public services ensures the Council continues to prioritise community wellbeing and long-term social value.

Conclusion

The evidence from this year clearly demonstrates that when the Borough invests in innovative, inclusive leisure and cultural programmes, residents respond.

Initiatives such as Kaset, Pickleball, Hydrohex, Good Boost and Virtual Les Mills have shown how modern leisure provision can deliver both strong participation and significant social value.

As the Borough moves into the next financial year, the focus will be on scaling these successes to ensure every resident of West Norfolk has access to opportunities that support better health, improved wellbeing and stronger communities.

Crem and cemeteries

Much has happened in this part of my portfolio since I regained the responsibility. Not least has been the decision to delay the closure of the Gayton Road Cemetery. This has been as a result of a good scrutiny task group and creative thinking from our Cemeteries team. Long-term, the closure stills seems inevitable, without a change to Environment Agency rules, but this gives us time to continue and explore opportunities that have recently materialised.

Below are some operational numbers that Members may find useful, particularly the numbers of available plots within Council control in the Borough.

- Crem and Cemetery volumes Financial YTD, and a comparison against same period LY and also LY full figures below.

Service Type	25/26 (April - Feb)	24/25 (April - Feb)	24/25 (Full Year)
Cremations			
Unattended Direct	207	183	199
Attended Direct	85	82	86
Full Service (Adult)	1203	1396	1523
Baby & Child (No fee)	38	37	44
Total	1533	1698	1852
Full Body Burials			
Gayton Road	35	61	67
Hunstanton	5	6	6
Walpole St Andrew	7	3	4
Marshland St James	1	3	4
TOTAL	48	73	81
Ashes Burials			
Gayton Road	43	44	55
Hunstanton	5	6	8
Walpole St Andrew	3	1	1
Marshland St James	1	1	1
Hardwick Road	0	3	4
TOTAL	52	55	69

- National cremation stats are collected in Feb by the Cremation Society, and normally published April / May, at that point we can benchmark locally and nationally.
- Crem improvements this year:
 - New carpets and catafalque curtains in chapel
 - New carpets and furniture in waiting room
 - New carpets in chapel corridors, bearers room and vestry.
 - Total Capital spend £30k
 - RFQ issued to contactors for toilet refurb
 - RFQ closes 20 March
 - RFQ issued to contractors (today) for drainage improvements in Gardens of Remembrance.
 - RFQ closes 1 May
- Cemetery spaces:
 - Gayton Road = 48 single depth graves
 - Additional capacity created by converting graves not yet formally mapped, expected to create additional 130 spaces

(TBC – once due diligence is completed to check families wont be “split” by placing a grave in between spaces) – E&C recommendation to go to cabinet in April.

- Hunstanton = 304 double depth spaces mapped.
 - C.38 spaces allocated for Islamic burials if required in the future.
- Walpole = 131 single depth spaces mapped.
- Marshland = 35 spaces mapped (usually double depth).

Business

It has been a very busy time for the business team.

King’s Lynn Manufacturing Group has been reestablished, with the first meeting taking place on the 14th April at the College of West Anglia.

Mayor’s Business Awards took place on the 6th March, with a new Agricultural category introduced to highlight the importance of agriculture within the West Norfolk economy.

- Collison Cut Flowers Ltd – Mayor’s Business of the Year
- British Sugar – Environmental Champion
- Molly Pybus (British Sugar) – Apprentice/Trainee of the Year
- Goodwins Hall Care Home – Customer Care
- Hayley Dexis East Anglia – Established Business of the Year
- Will Charter – Business Leader of the Year
- S&L Self-Harm Distraction Kits – Business Innovation
- O.W. Wortley & Sons Ltd – Champions in Agriculture
- Ellie Yusuf (Dedicated Care East Anglia) – Employee of the Year
- Mabel Bakery – Independent Retailer
- Stephenson Smart – King’s Lynn Champion
- Majestic Cinema – Leisure & Tourism
- Charterhouse Property Solutions – Small Business of the Year

On the 10th of February the Department of Work and Pensions in conjunction with the Borough Council, held an event at the Corn Exchange for local students and the general public to promote the career and apprenticeship opportunities available in West Norfolk. In just two hours, 845 people attended the event, with 55 businesses having a stand at the event. This is a massive expansion of the event that was previously held within the job centre with around 15 businesses.

£50,000 Business Growth Fund through Norfolk County Council has been awarded to a manufacturing business within King’s Lynn, there are also other West Norfolk businesses that currently have grant award applications in progress.

We are now almost full on the Enterprise Zone completed units, and are having talks with potential buyers for plots.

Property

This report provides Members with an update on property and asset management activity, including progress with property disposals, operational property management work, and the development of the Strategic Asset Management Plan.

Capital Receipts and Property Disposals

The Council continues to progress its property disposals programme in line with the adopted Disposal Policy, supporting the generation of capital receipts and ensuring that surplus assets are identified and managed effectively.

Item	Number	Total Value
Properties sold or sales agreed since April 2025	5	£2,320,000
Properties currently on the market	7	£4,460,000
Further properties identified as surplus under the Disposal Policy	23	£3,576,000
TOTAL		£10,356,000

Strategic Property Activity

A number of strategic property matters have progressed during the reporting period, including ongoing negotiations with the landlord of a key town centre property following a change in position regarding previously agreed terms, engagement with a national leisure organisation regarding potential opportunities relating to a town centre site, and preparatory work undertaken to support continuity within the property and projects service.

Operational Property Management

- Completion of the first condition survey, with approximately 100 further properties scheduled for inspection.
- Resolution of a building safety issue at Broad Street including reinstatement of contractor works to complete a new external fire escape staircase.
- Review and updating of Gerda Boxes across the estate to ensure compliance with fire safety requirements.
- Ongoing work with the legal team regarding matters relating to the Nar Ouse Enterprise Zone.
- Actions agreed following an unexpected fire alarm activation at Kings Court.
- Resolution of fire door compliance queries at Kings Court with scheduling agreed with the manufacturer.
- Presentation of an updated property compliance report to senior leadership.

Priority Property Issues

- Statutory property compliance
- Corporate landlord restructuring

- Implementation of the Property Disposals Policy
- Delivery of capital receipts
- Property data validation
- Addressing backlog of rent reviews and lease renewals
- Letting of vacant units
- Development of the Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP)

Strategic Asset Management Plan (SAMP)

Work is underway to produce a comprehensive Strategic Asset Management Plan which will provide a long-term framework for managing the Council's property portfolio. The plan will address a wider brief than property disposals alone and will rely on condition surveys across the estate to understand repair liabilities, forecast maintenance costs and inform decisions about whether assets should be retained, invested in or disposed of.

While the commissioning of IT equipment and software delayed the start of the survey programme, these issues have now been resolved and on-site surveys commenced this week. The Council is working hard to bring forward the Strategic Asset Management Plan and it will be presented to Cabinet once the necessary information has been gathered and analysed.

Conclusion

The Council's property disposals programme is progressing well, with over £10 million of potential capital receipts identified alongside further opportunities currently under consideration. Operational property management continues to focus on compliance, safety and effective estate management while work advances on the Strategic Asset Management Plan to guide future decision making.

Finally, I would formally like to thank Jason Birch, who is leaving us and the end of the month to take up another interim role in Newcastle. Jason has achieved giant steps forward for our Council since joining as an interim last year. His work has been invaluable in the challenge of making sense of the Commercial portfolio and this work will now be continued by our new AD for Property, Liz Macdonald, who joins us shortly from NORSE.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Many and various across the whole portfolio

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

I have met with the following officers, most of which are scheduled for further meetings in the coming months.

Duncan Hall
Kate Blakemore
Michelle Drewery
Emma Hobbs
Stuart Ashworth
Martin Chisholm
David Morton
Chris Black
Jason Birch
David Gent
Anne-Marie Ketteringham
Jemma Curtis
Connor Smalls
Robin Lewis
Tim Fitzhigham
James Grant
Tim Baldwin
Phillipa Sillis
David Whiles
Hannah Wood-Handy
Nicola Cooper
Jo Stanton

Apologies if I've missed some which I'm sure I have!

Cllr. Alistair Beales Report to Council
Date of Council Meeting 26th March 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

I am delighted that this Council has been nominated in two categories in the annual Local Government Chronicle (LGC) awards, the Oscars of the Local Government world. In the words of the LGC editor "We received more than 1,000 entries to the LGC Awards 2026, making it another record breaking year, It's a huge achievement to make the shortlist."

<https://awards.lgcplus.com/lgca2026/en/page/2026-shortlist>

The first category is Housing, and the Borough Council has been nominated for the positive intervention in the market of the Major Housing Scheme. This nomination reflects the hard work of officers and councillors across many years and multiple administrations, and my thanks to all involved for their hard work. As the Portfolio Holder who proposed and initiated the Major Housing Scheme, the nomination gives me a great deal of personal pride whatever the outcome at the awards ceremony.

The second category is Most Improved Council and this nomination can be attributed to the fresh perspective, energy and sheer hard work of our CEO and the wider officer team backed up by the support of the elected membership and your willingness to consider and take tough decisions. Some of you will recall the Peer Review in the first year of this council term, and the Peers being present at a Joint Panels meeting which frankly was a tetchy and highly adversarial car crash. The Peer Review initial report on improvements required was not particularly enjoyable reading. So from a personal perspective, it was amusing and satisfying in equal part to be present at the final Peer Review meeting when virtually all of their recommendations and targets had been surpassed. They were bemused shall we say. But whilst that gives me some pleasure, it's far from enough, we are much improved (and I hope LGC Most Improved!) but we have more to do to prepare our council, our staff and our elected membership for the brave new unitary world.

On that final point, I pursue a relentless leadership style of seeking consensus wherever and whenever possible and putting the residents and our community first. The unanimous support of this council for our three unitary solution was a demonstration of what we can achieve when we all pull in the same direction and I urge more of that please. It may sound trite, but the divisions between us are small compared to the duty to do our best for our community, a duty that binds us all.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

I have initiated new steering group to strengthen governance of the Major Housing Scheme and support the officers at the coal face of housing delivery. The new Housing Development Steering Group includes senior officers and councillors and is not a decision making body but seeks to better deliver agreed policy. I will not go into detail here but membership and ToR can be made available to those that are interested.

Similar strengthening to the governance of the delivery of the Guildhall project is ongoing, albeit at an earlier stage. More anon.

I will request that the Constitutional Informal Working Group review the process of tabling amendments to the Budget and make recommendations to CPP.

I will be discussing with the Cabinet Member for Finance an idea for a Cabinet Task Group to give as wide a membership as possible the opportunity to review and comment upon the Budget given the widely expressed wish to do so at our full Council meeting when the Budget was considered.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Too numerous to note. My diary is available on request to anyone who is interested.