



COUNCIL MEETING

Agenda

Thursday, 29th October, 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

21 October 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, 29th October, 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 - 19)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 24th September 2026.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Page 20)

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: 13th October 2026** (Pages 21 - 23)

CAB57: National Planning Scheme of Delegation

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

9. NOTICES OF MOTION

None.

10. CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS (Pages 24 - 68)

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

Transport Strategy and Car Parking – Councillor J Ratcliffe

Deputy Leader and Business – Cllr S Ring

Leader - Councillor A Beales

11. 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, 24th September, 2026 at 5.00 pm in the Town Hall, Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn

PRESENT: Councillor S Bearshaw (Chair)

Councillors B Ayres, T Barclay, A Beales, J Bhondi, P Bland, R Blunt, F Bone, A Bubb, A Bullen, R Coates, Mrs J Collingham, S Collop, R Colwell, C J Crofts, P Devulapalli, S Everett, J Fry, B Griffin, P Hodson, B Jones, A Kemp, J Kirk, B Long, A Moore, J Moriarty, S Nash, J Osborne, T Parish, F Pidcock, P Powers, J Ratcliffe, S Ring, C Rose, J Rust, A Ryves, D Sayers, Mrs V Spikings, M Storey and A Ware

C:36 **PRAYERS**

Prayers were led by Father Ben Almond.

C:37 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dickinson, Heneghan, Humphrey, Joyce, Kunes, Lintern, Lowe, Morley, Sandell, Squire, Tyler, de Whalley and de Winton.

C:38 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: The minutes from the meeting held on 29th July were agreed as a correct record.

C:39 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

C:40 **MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None.

C:41 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

C:42 **PETITIONS AND PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no petitions or public questions.

C:43 **REVIEW OF PROPORTIONALITY**

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In proposing the recommendations contained within the report, Councillor Beales proposed an amendment to the proportional allocation of seats. He explained to Council that the Audit Committee, which had a current Membership of five Members, had experienced issues with maintaining a quorum and he proposed that the Membership be increased to seven Members, which would maintain a quoracy of three. Councillor Beales outlined the impact that this would have on the proportionality report as contained in the Agenda as follows:

Audit Committee Membership would be revised to seven Members and political make up would be 3 Independent Partnership, 2 Conservative, 1 Reform and 1 Labour. This would impact the overall proportionality further in that the Labour Group would lose a seat on the Licensing and Appeals Board and the Independent Partnership would gain a seat on the Licensing and Appeals Board.

Councillor Ring seconded the amendment to the proposal.

After being put to the vote, Council agreed the amendment to proportionality in order to increase the Membership of the Audit Committee from five Members to seven Members.

Council then approved the revised proportionality calculations, as amended.

A copy of the revised proportionality figures, as approved by Council is appended to these minutes.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Membership of the Audit Committee be increased from five Members to Seven Members.
2. That the proportional allocation of seats be amended in accordance with the table appended to these minutes.
3. That the make up of Task Groups be amended in accordance with section 3 of the report and Democratic Services liaise with Group Leaders regarding revised appointments to Task Groups as required.

C:44

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COUNCIL BODIES

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Cabinet – 8 September 2026

CAB45: Appointment of Honorary Aldermen

Councillor Beales proposed Cabinet Recommendation 45, Appointment of Honorary Aldermen, and expressed his support for the

former Councillors nominated for Honorary Alderman status. He highlighted the significant contribution each nominee had made through their civic duties, Council responsibilities and ward representation, together with their dedicated service to the local community.

Councillor Blunt seconded the proposal and stated that he did so with great honour.

Councillor Hodson proposed the addition of former Councillor Sampson to the list of nominees. In response, the Mayor advised that this could be considered at a future date to allow the appropriate process to be followed and to ensure that the eligibility criteria were fully considered.

Councillor Long referred to the timing of the awards and requested that consideration be given to how recognition of service could continue to be achieved in the future, particularly in light of proposals for local government reorganisation and the establishment of a Unitary Council. He noted that many newly elected Councillors might be unfamiliar with those who had previously given distinguished service to the Borough Council.

Councillor Rust expressed her support for the nominations and agreed that the individuals concerned were worthy recipients of the honour.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Spikings, proposed the addition of former Councillor Nockolds to the list of nominees. The Mayor advised that this nomination would be considered alongside the additional nomination put forward by Councillor Hodson.

Councillor Moriarty reminded Council of the role and purpose of Honorary Aldermen, which was to represent the Mayor in their absence, and expressed his support for the recommendations.

Councillor Collop spoke in support of the nominations and reminded Council that former Councillor Lord Howard had played a key role in the establishment of the King's Lynn Area Committee.

Councillor Collingham commented that it was important to ensure that the award retained its prestige and suggested that this could be diminished if it were conferred upon too many former Councillors.

Councillor Kirk expressed his support for the nominations before Council.

Councillor Kemp also supported the nominations and stated that it was important to maintain the tradition of recognising distinguished service to the Council.

Councillor Beales, in summing up, thanked Members for their contributions to the debate. He reminded Council that there were

currently nineteen serving Honorary Aldermen and advised that rather than considering ad hoc nominations, through would be given to proper consideration to the significant number of former Councillors that fulfilled the minimum requirements for nomination as an Alderman, mindful of the exceptional nature of the award and giving due respect to the will of Council.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Council places on record its sincere appreciation and gratitude for the eminent services rendered to the Borough Council by former Councillors Carol Bower, Colin Manning, Lesley Bambridge and Lord Greville Howard.
2. That, pursuant to Section 249(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, the title of Honorary Alderman be conferred upon former Councillors Carol Bower, Colin Manning, Lesley Bambridge and Lord Greville Howard in recognition of their eminent service to the Borough.
3. That an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council be convened on Thursday 29 October 2026, immediately following the ordinary meeting of the Council, for the formal conferment of the title of Honorary Alderman and the presentation of aldermanic badges to the recipients.

CAB46: Future Swimming Provision for West Norfolk

Councillor Ring proposed Cabinet Recommendation CAB46, *Future Swimming Provision for West Norfolk*, and reminded Council that there were two recommendations for consideration. He outlined the need for a replacement swimming facility, highlighting the condition of the existing St James Pool, which was approaching the end of its operational life and incurring increasing maintenance costs. He emphasised the importance of maintaining swimming provision within the Borough and referred to the need to improve water safety and swimming ability amongst young people. Councillor Ring advised that the proposals had been developed following extensive consultation and stakeholder engagement and encouraged Council to support the recommendations.

Councillor Beales seconded the proposal and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Rust expressed her support for the proposals, stating that they responded to the needs of young people across West Norfolk. She highlighted concerns regarding low levels of swimming ability and noted that the proposals supported the Council's ambition to become a Marmot Place. She further commented that the project would contribute to addressing health inequalities and provide wider preventative health and social benefits.

Councillor Long acknowledged that the Corporate Performance Panel had considered and supported the recommendations. However, he requested further information on the costs associated with bringing the existing St James facility up to a standard that would enable its continued operation. He suggested that, in light of the pause in Local Government Reorganisation, consideration should be given to delaying the project until further information on the ongoing costs of retaining St James Pool had been provided.

Councillor Long proposed that progress on the project be delayed to allow further work to be undertaken. The Mayor referred Councillor Long to Council Procedure Rule 13.13 and advised that the proposal did not constitute a valid amendment. Councillor Long subsequently advised that he would not be supporting the recommendations.

Councillor Kemp expressed concern that relocating the pool from the town centre would reduce accessibility for many residents. She noted the advantages of the current location in terms of proximity to bus and rail services and stated that she could not support the proposals due to concerns regarding the proposed location.

Councillor Osborne acknowledged concerns relating to the proposed location but agreed that St James Pool required replacement as it was an outdated facility. He explained that redevelopment on the existing site would result in the Borough being without swimming provision for a significant period. Councillor Osborne stated that the proposed project timetable would allow sufficient opportunity to consider access improvements and confirmed that he would be supporting the proposals.

Councillor Bubb commented that the proposed location could be difficult to access for residents without private transport. He suggested that either a town centre location or a dedicated bus service should be considered.

Councillor Moriarty spoke in support of the proposals and questioned why the concerns raised by Councillor Long had not been put forward when the matter was considered by the Corporate Performance Panel.

Councillor Ryves expressed the view that additional information was required regarding both the costs of retaining St James Pool and the overall costs of the proposed project, particularly in light of the Council's financial position and borrowing requirements. He also suggested that further consideration should be given to the proposed location.

Councillor Moore stated that he would have supported a proposal to delay the project to allow further work to be undertaken. He disagreed with comments made regarding accessibility and, following a point of clarification from Councillor Osborne that his earlier comments related

to improvements in access to Lynnsport, reiterated his concerns. Councillor Moore stated that the proposals should be revisited to provide Members with a fuller understanding of the costs associated with retaining St James Pool and to allow previous work to be reviewed. He advised that he would not be supporting the recommendations.

Following further comments from Councillor Ryves, the Mayor reminded Council that Councillor Ryves had already spoken on the matter.

Councillor Bone commented that retaining the existing location would result in a period without swimming provision whilst redevelopment works were undertaken. He emphasised the importance of maintaining swimming facilities for schools and considered Lynnsport to be within walking distance of a number of secondary schools. Councillor Bone confirmed that he would be supporting the recommendations.

Councillor Ratcliffe advised that she had attended the Corporate Performance Panel meeting and considered that the matter had been thoroughly debated, with costs receiving detailed scrutiny. She confirmed her support for the proposals.

Councillor Colwell spoke in support of the recommendations and expressed concern at suggestions that the project be delayed. He described the proposal as an exciting opportunity to deliver an important community facility and support the local economy. He noted that Lynnsport was surrounded by existing housing development, was accessible to residents and benefited from free parking.

Councillor Devulapalli thanked Councillor Ring for engaging with stakeholders throughout the process. However, she expressed concern regarding the accessibility of the proposed location and the availability of public transport links. She also queried whether alternative sites had been considered and stated that a pause in the project would allow the concerns raised to be addressed.

Councillor Griffin noted that there were already two other swimming pools located to the north of the town centre and commented that the area surrounding Lynnsport often experienced significant traffic congestion at peak times. He stated that he would not be supporting the recommendations as he felt the proposals had not been subject to sufficient scrutiny.

Councillor Beales referred to previous comments regarding the accessibility of Lynnsport and noted that these appeared to conflict with concerns raised about traffic congestion in the area. He stated that Lynnsport was already a well-used facility and advised that accessibility considerations would form part of the overall customer experience and design process. Councillor Beales reminded Members that St James Pool was nearing the end of its operational life and

carried significant maintenance costs. He also referred to the results of the public consultation and emphasised the need for investment in a modern replacement facility.

Councillor Blunt, as Chair of the Corporate Performance Panel, advised that the matter had been the subject of extensive debate at the Panel and confirmed his support for the proposals.

Councillor Sayers stated that whilst he remained mindful of the financial implications, the project was about more than finances and would provide a valuable facility for the residents of West Norfolk.

Councillor Nash commented that no information had been provided regarding the ongoing costs of retaining St James Pool or detail of other potential locations that had been considered. He referred to the proposed development at West Winch as a possible alternative location and advised that he would not be supporting the recommendations.

Councillor Ring, in summing up, advised that a cross-party working group had examined a range of locations and options and had concluded that no town centre site was capable of accommodating the proposed facility. He stated that the Lynnsport location was essential to ensuring the economic viability of the project. Councillor Ring further advised that redevelopment of the St James site would result in the town centre being without swimming provision for approximately two years, with significant implications for swimming clubs and local schools. He referred to available public transport options, including West Norfolk Community Transport services, and stated that Lynnsport was accessible to many residents. Councillor Ring expressed disappointment that Councillor Griffin was unable to support the proposals, particularly given the benefits that the new facility would bring to residents living in more deprived areas of the Borough. He stated that any delay would postpone the delivery of a much-needed facility for the residents of West Norfolk and urged Council to support the recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That Full Council:

1. Approve the allocation of a maximum of £845,609.17 from reserves to fund the new Lynnsport Project through to RIBA Stage 3.
2. Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance, to determine the appropriate reserve to fund the work.

COUNCIL ADJOURNED FOR A COMFORT BREAK FROM 6.18pm to 6.30pm.

C:45

QUEEN ELIZABETH HOSPITAL KING'S LYNN

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Councillor Beales proposed the recommendations contained within the report and advised Members that it was important that the matter be considered by Full Council, given the significance of the Hospital to the local community. He stated that it was vital for both the Council and residents to understand the Council's formal position on the future of the Hospital and to provide reassurance regarding the actions being taken by the Council. He considered it appropriate that Full Council had the opportunity to debate the matter.

Councillor Beales explained that the intention was also to assist the QEH and Norfolk Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee by setting out the formal view of the Council.

He outlined the recommendations contained within the report for Council's consideration, including the proposal to arrange a Joint Panel Meeting following a briefing from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The recommendations recognised that some highly specialised services could be provided on a regional basis; however, this should not be used as justification for the removal of essential local services from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, particularly given the rural nature of the area.

Councillor Rust, in seconding the report, expressed her support for the recommendations. She referred to previous campaigns that had been undertaken and the recent Hospital Annual General Meeting. She referred to maternity services and noted that fertility rates had declined nationally. Councillor Rust also referred to elective procedures which could be delivered regionally but emphasised the need to maintain appropriate local provision, particularly for emergency services.

Councillor Rust highlighted the current Healthwatch survey and encouraged residents and Councillors to respond, whilst noting that some of the questions were restrictive. She further encouraged individuals to contact the Hospital directly if they were unable to fully express their views through the survey.

Councillor Rust also referred to planned housing growth and the increasing population, highlighting the need to ensure that local healthcare services were maintained and developed accordingly.

Councillor Sayers provided details of an occasion when his partner had required urgent healthcare support during pregnancy and had been able to access assistance quickly through the ambulance service. He stated that the situation would have been very different if local assistance was unavailable. Councillor Sayers expressed concern that the loss of local ambulance provision could have serious

consequences in similar situations and stated that lives could be placed at risk.

Councillor Colwell welcomed the report and its recommendations. He stressed the importance of providing residents with a clear statement of the Council's position. He referred to the community petition, which had attracted more than 10,000 signatures, and encouraged those who had not yet signed to do so. He emphasised the need to reassure residents that vital hospital services would remain locally.

Councillor Colwell also informed Council of a public event 'Human A&E Queue' demonstration due to take place on the Tuesday Market Place on 17 October at 11.30am.

Councillor Osborne expressed his support for the proposals and commended the recommendations set out within the report.

Councillor Kemp stated that local services should not be removed given the distances involved in travelling to alternative hospitals and rural nature of the area. Whilst acknowledging the important role of Health Hubs, she emphasised that core hospital services should continue to be provided locally.

Councillor Fry outlined the range of services currently provided locally and gave an example of the Accident and Emergency process, explaining how it could be adversely affected if patients were required to travel further for emergency treatment. She also highlighted the importance of patient flow in supporting patient health and wellbeing and referred to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit provision. Councillor Fry expressed her support for the recommendations contained within the report.

Councillor Long spoke in support of the report and stated that people's health and lives should not be placed at risk. He highlighted the potential impact on ambulance services if greater travel distances were required, together with the implications for hospital patient transport services.

Councillor Ryves, in supporting the recommendations, suggested that the Council should consider allocating funding to gather evidence and data to support the case for retaining local hospital services. The Mayor referred Councillor Ryves to the recommendations contained within the report and advised that this matter could be considered further by the Joint Panel when it examined the issues in greater detail.

Councillor Ring addressed Council and stated that the prospect of not having a fully functioning local hospital was a matter of significant concern. He referred to services that had already been lost or were no longer available in King's Lynn, including certain mental health provisions. Councillor Ring stated that residents were concerned about the potential loss of further vital services. He emphasised that the issue

was not a political matter but one that was of collective importance to the people of West Norfolk and the surrounding area who relied upon the services provided by the Hospital.

Councillor Jones stated that the Hospital had saved his life, as well as the lives of many other residents.

Councillor Parish commented on his own experience of using emergency services at the Hospital and stressed the importance of retaining services locally. He noted that ambulances would be unavailable for longer periods if required to travel greater distances.

Councillor Storey commented that the Hospital was the most important building in the Borough and that residents' health and wellbeing were of paramount importance. He expressed his full support for the recommendations and thanked the Leader for bringing the matter before Council.

Councillor Devulapalli reminded Members that she served on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board of Governors and encouraged Councillors to pass any comments to her for onward submission to the Board. She also urged Members to complete the Healthwatch survey and agreed to circulate details of the survey to all Councillors.

Councillor Collingham expressed the view that West Norfolk was being overlooked and referred to concerns relating to both hospital and railway services. She supported Councillor Ryves' suggestion that funding should be made available to gather evidence and data to strengthen the case for retaining local services.

The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Spikings, reminded Council that any loss of services would also result in the loss of skilled doctors, nurses and other key support staff. She emphasised the importance of ensuring that appropriate services were available locally and highlighted the levels of deprivation experienced in the area.

Councillor Ratcliffe supported the comments made throughout the debate. In response to comments regarding rail services, she informed Council that she had met with the MP for South West Norfolk to discuss the matter. Councillor Ratcliffe also commented on challenges facing West Norfolk in relation to transport links, broadband provision and healthcare services, and urged Members to support the recommendations contained within the report.

Councillor Beales, in summing up, thanked Members for their contributions and the constructive manner in which the debate had been conducted. Referring to the suggestion that additional funding be made available to gather evidence, he stated that whilst he did not want to pre-empt scrutiny by the Joint Panel, he reassured Members that funds would be allocated if needed and would be reported to Council.

On being put to the vote the recommendations contained within the report were approved unanimously.

RESOLVED: That Council:

1. Support the retention at QEH of 24/7 A&E, acute medicine, emergency general surgery, critical care, anaesthesia and emergency theatres, consultant led maternity and obstetrics, paediatrics and appropriate neonatal care, trauma and orthopaedics, core acute medical specialties, stroke assessment and inpatient care, and comprehensive diagnostic services.
2. Recognise that highly specialised services may appropriately be provided at regional or tertiary centres where there is a clear clinical case.
3. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Norfolk and Waveney University Hospitals Group seeking assurance that the new hospital and any future clinical strategy will maintain the complete package of services necessary for QEH to continue functioning as a full District General Hospital serving West Norfolk and its wider catchment.
4. That Council notes the significance of this matter and its relevance to the Council's scrutiny function, and requests the Chairs of the relevant Panels to convene a Joint Panel meeting to consider the future provision of services at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.
5. The Joint Panel should be informed by the Councillors' Briefing Session arranged with the Hospital, with Members encouraged to identify and raise key questions and lines of enquiry during that briefing to support the Panel's subsequent consideration of the issues.
6. That representatives of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital be invited to attend the Joint Panel meeting to provide information, respond to Members' questions, and assist the Council in understanding the implications of future service delivery and hospital development plans for West Norfolk and its wider catchment area.

C:46 **NOTICES OF MOTION**

None.

C:47 **NOTICE OF MOTION 02/26 - REVIEW OF CONSULTANT EXPENDITURE RELATING TO LYNNSPORT PROPOSAL**

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Councillor Blunt, as Chair of the Corporate Performance Panel proposed the recommendations within the report which presented the

findings of the Corporate Performance Panel following its review of Notice of Motion 2/26 regarding consultant expenditure on the Lynnsport and St James Pool proposal. He explained that the Panel had reviewed the procurement arrangements, governance processes, financial controls and affordability assessments associated with the project. It was demonstrated that consultants were appointed through a compliant procurement process using an established framework and mini-competition. The project progressed through appropriate governance routes, with Cabinet and Council considering key decisions throughout its development.

Councillor Blunt advised that the Panel also examined affordability and financial oversight and Members were advised that affordability assessments formed part of the project development process and that concerns regarding borrowing constraints were identified through review by the Section 151 Officer before any final commitment was made. Those concerns ultimately led to the project being paused and reconsidered.

Councillor Blunt explained that the Panel further considered whether value had been obtained from the work undertaken. Whilst the project had not progressed, Members recognised that the studies, technical assessments and design work completed provided an important evidence base that could continue to inform future leisure investment decisions.

Councillor Blunt explained that, importantly, the review also identified lessons for future projects, particularly around the benefits of earlier stakeholder engagement and maintaining affordability reviews throughout project development.

The Corporate Performance Panel made no further recommendations and concluded that the matters raised within Notice of Motion 02/26 had been fully considered. Councillor Blunt requested that Council note the findings of the Panel and agree that the requirements of the Notice of Motion had now been fulfilled.

Councillor Long as Vice Chair of the Corporate Performance Panel, seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED: That Council:

1. Notes the findings of the Corporate Performance Panel in response to Notice of Motion 02/26.
2. Notes that the Panel found evidence that procurement, governance and financial oversight processes were applied during the development of the Lynnsport proposal.

3. Supports the continued incorporation of lessons learned from the project, particularly in relation to stakeholder engagement and ongoing affordability review during major capital projects.

4. Agrees that the requirements of Notice of Motion 02/26 have now been fulfilled.

C:48

CABINET MEMBERS REPORTS

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Councillor Beales moved the Cabinet Members Reports and provided an update on the pause of Local Government Review, and the recent staff briefings that had been arranged and well attended.

Councillor Blunt referred to the decision to pause Local Government Reorganisation and to recent communications issued by Norfolk County Council. He sought reassurance that West Norfolk would continue to have a strong voice and representation in discussions going forward. In response, Councillor Beales advised that six Norfolk authorities had supported the three-unitary authority model and considered this to be a position of strength. He assured Members that he would continue to advocate for West Norfolk's interests and ensure that the area remained fully represented in future discussions.

In response to a question from Councillor Everett, it was confirmed that the Community Governance Review relating to the establishment of a Town Council for King's Lynn was continuing to progress. Members were advised that a second phase of consultation would be undertaken, providing further information on governance arrangements, precept implications and financial considerations. The consultation material would first be considered and agreed by the Electoral Arrangements Committee before being issued.

Councillor Kemp referred to funding for improvements to the Ferry Landing Stage. Councillor Beales explained that discussions had been taking place between the Borough Council and Norfolk County Council regarding the matter and agreed to circulate Norfolk County Council's most recent response to all Members for information.

Councillor Parish referred to the ongoing 'Call for Sites' consultation and requested that consideration be given to making future online consultations easier to navigate. Councillor Moriarty reminded Members that the Call for Sites exercise represented an early stage of the Local Plan process. He advised that the consultation had been developed in conjunction with the Communications Team and that briefing sessions had been held with parish councils. Councillor Moriarty explained that the next stage would involve the Local Plan Task Group considering the submitted sites, together with a review of

the effectiveness of the consultation process and any improvements that could be made for future exercises. He thanked the officers involved in progressing the Local Plan.

Councillor Long referred to advertising posters for circuses displayed on lampposts and, whilst acknowledging that such displays were exempt from fly-posting restrictions, asked whether further efforts could be made to reduce visual clutter. Councillor Beales agreed to investigate the matter. He also advised that improvements to the appearance of the Southgates Garage site would be progressed in the near future.

Councillor Everett raised concerns regarding recent disruptions to Fen Line rail services. Councillor Ratcliffe advised that she had met with the relevant Members of Parliament, who recognised that the recent service failures were unacceptable. She also confirmed that she was liaising with organisations including Transport East and Greater Anglia to pursue improvements and agreed to provide Members with updates through future Cabinet Members' Reports to Council.

Councillor Kemp referred to safeguarding services and the South Lynn Health Hub and asked what steps could be taken to secure GP provision at the facility. Councillor Rust agreed to write to the Integrated Care Board to propose that funding be made available to support the provision of GP services at the Health Hub.

Councillor Parish requested that parish councils continue to be kept informed regarding developments related to Local Government Reorganisation. Councillor Beales reminded Members that the process had been paused rather than cancelled and referred to correspondence he had received from the relevant Government Minister.

Councillor Blunt referred to proposals for a second substation at Walpole and asked whether there would be opportunities for parish councils to contribute to discussions regarding areas of risk. Councillor Beales agreed to meet with Councillor Blunt to discuss the matter further.

Councillor Kirk congratulated all those involved in the Heritage Open Day events, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. Councillor Beales endorsed those comments and acknowledged the significant contribution made by all those involved in delivering the event.

Councillor Kemp referred to the recent withdrawal of a bus service that had served St James Surgery and asked whether any action could be taken to reinstate it. Councillor Ratcliffe requested further details and agreed to investigate the matter.

Councillor Sayers referred to the Data Protection complaints procedure and advised that he had been unable to locate the relevant information

on the Council's website. Councillor Ratcliffe confirmed that the policy had been approved and published and advised that further work was being undertaken to implement and publicise the associated complaints procedure.

Councillor Blunt congratulated all those involved in organising the Hunstanton Soap Box Derby and asked whether opportunities to expand the event in future years had been considered, including the provision of video screens or grandstands. Councillor Beales advised that he would pass those suggestions to Councillor Lintern for consideration.

Councillor Kemp referred to the Call for Sites exercise and the consideration of land within areas at high risk of flooding. Councillor Moriarty advised that all submitted sites would be assessed through the Local Plan process and that further consultation would be undertaken as required.

Having sat for almost three hours, the Mayor proposed that the duration of the meeting be extended to enable the remaining business to be concluded. Upon being put to the meeting, Council did not agree to extend the duration of the meeting.

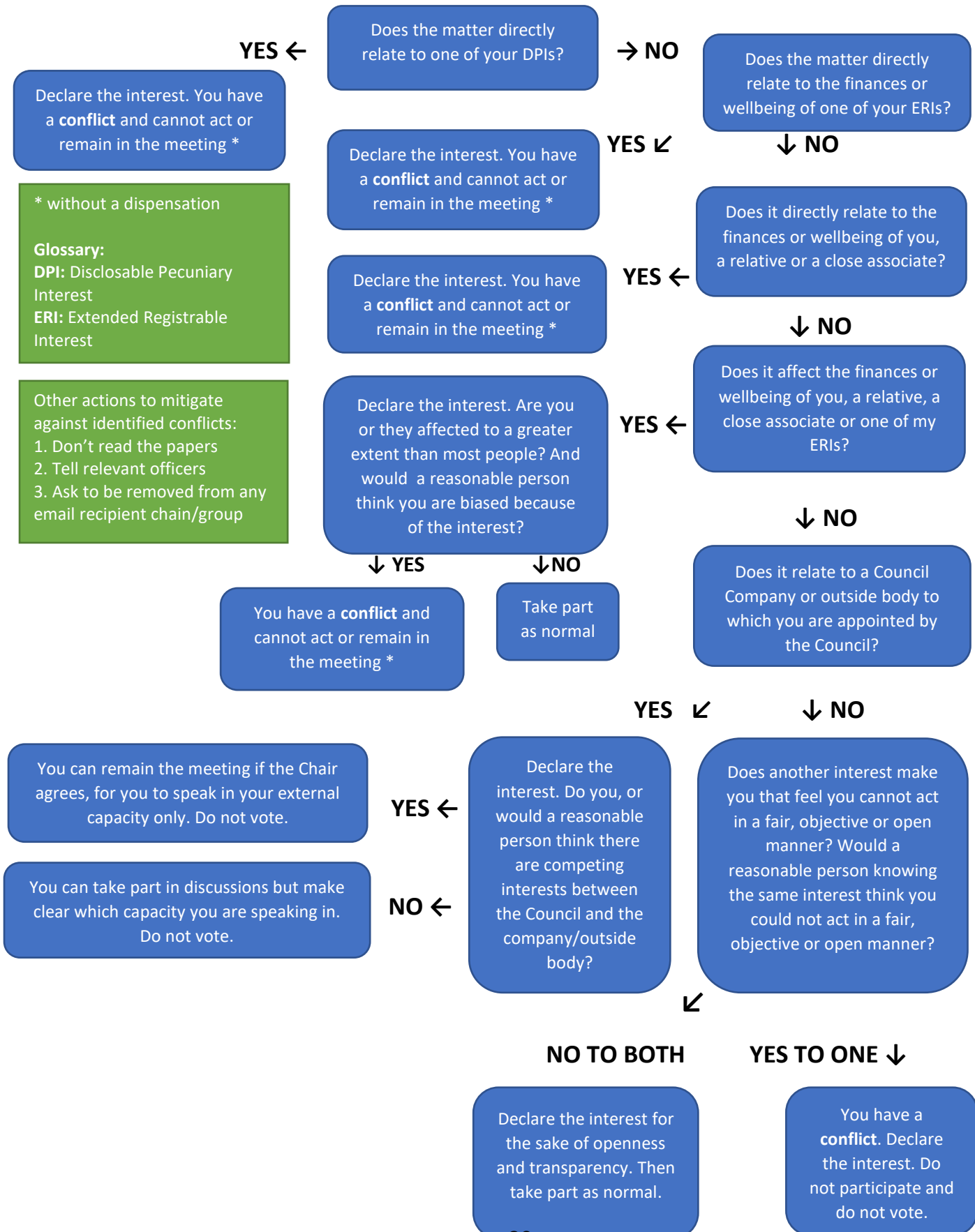
Councillor Devulapalli referred to the Health and Wellbeing Partnership and the ongoing review of its membership arrangements. Councillor Beales advised that a meeting had been arranged to ensure that the Borough Council remained appropriately represented and involved in the Partnership's future work.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

DECLARING AN INTEREST AND MANAGING ANY CONFLICTS FLOWCHART



START



**RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL 21 OCTOBER 2026 FROM THE
CABINET MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2026**

CAB57 NATIONAL PLANNING SCHEME OF DELEGATION

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Cabinet noted that the Regeneration and Development Panel had considered this report and supported the recommendations, subject to the comments and concerns raised by the Panel, as set out below:

1. Properly submitted Ward Member requests for consideration through the gateway process to be taken seriously.
2. Delays in responses from internal Council consultees be investigated; and
3. Quarterly monitoring information on the operation of the Scheme be provided.

Councillor Moriarty as Portfolio Holder, presented the report and reminded Cabinet of the Government consultation process and the response previously submitted by the Council. He explained that the National Planning Scheme of Delegation formed part of the wider programme of Government planning reforms. Councillor Moriarty outlined the proposed arrangements for determining planning applications, including the circumstances in which applications would be considered by the Planning Committee and the criteria that would need to be satisfied where a Member sought to call in an application for Committee consideration. It was noted that the majority of planning applications would be determined under delegated powers by officers unless exceptional circumstances applied and the gateway test had been met. Councillor Moriarty also provided details of the proposed triage system that would be introduced as part of the new arrangements.

In addressing the recommendations put forward by the Regeneration and Development Panel, Councillor Moriarty stated that requests submitted by Ward Members would be given full consideration and assessed against the established criteria. He further advised that delays in responses from consultees would be monitored where necessary. Councillor Moriarty confirmed that the operation of the new system would be subject to ongoing monitoring, with a review taking place after six months, the findings of which could be presented to the Regeneration and Development Panel if required.

Referring to concerns raised regarding the 21-day period for Ward Member call-in requests, Councillor Moriarty reminded Members that details of applications were frequently available in advance of the formal consultation period. He also noted that Councillors received the weekly list of planning applications for information and review.

Councillor Ratcliffe asked whether notifications issued to Councillors could include consultation dates to assist Members in understanding the relevant timescales for submitting requests. In response, the Planning Control Manager reminded Members that once an application had been allocated to an officer, notification was issued to the relevant Ward Member to provide early notice. Details of the application would also be included within the weekly list of planning applications. It was explained that as much

information as possible would be made available to Councillors, including a link to the call-in request form and details of the criteria that would need to be met. Information relating to Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 applications would also be provided.

Councillor de Whalley expressed concern that valuable local knowledge could be lost in the decision-making process if Members had reduced involvement in determining planning applications. He stressed the importance of both Councillors and Parish Councils being actively engaged in the Local Plan process. Councillor Moriarty agreed that widespread engagement in the Local Plan process was essential and encouraged Members to ensure that their Parish Councils remained informed and involved.

Councillor Squire welcomed the commitment to undertake a six-month review and noted that its findings could be considered by the Regeneration and Development Panel. She also recognised the proactive role Councillors would need to play in monitoring the weekly list of applications and identifying those that might satisfy the criteria for determination by the Planning Committee.

In response to a further question from Councillor Ratcliffe, it was confirmed that the relevant Ward Member would receive early notification when a planning application was allocated to an officer. Members representing adjoining wards, or wards potentially affected by a proposal, would be able to view applications through the weekly list. The Planning Control Manager further confirmed that where an application affected more than one ward, all relevant Ward Members would be notified.

Councillor Lintern emphasised the importance of local knowledge and the need for Planning Officers to have a good understanding of the areas for which they were responsible. The Planning Control Manager explained that case officers and principal planners worked closely together and often concentrated on consistent geographical areas, enabling them to develop detailed local knowledge.

Councillor Morley referred to the use of the term "development plans" and sought clarification on its meaning. It was confirmed that the term related to both the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans. Officers agreed to consider whether this could be made clearer within the documentation. The Planning Control Manager also highlighted the ongoing information, guidance and training provided to Parish Councils, noting that they should therefore be aware of the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Planning processes. It was further confirmed that additional guidance and training would be provided in relation to the new scheme.

In response to a question from Councillor Lintern, it was confirmed that not all major applications would automatically be referred to the Planning Committee and that there would need to be sufficient justification for doing so, with the gateway test having been met.

Councillor Parish addressed Cabinet under Standing Order 34. He advised that the Regeneration and Development Panel had considered and debated the matter in detail and had supported the recommendations, recognising that the proposals arose from national legislation imposed on local authorities. Councillor Parish referred to the three comments submitted by the Panel and emphasised the importance of ensuring that Members had access to as much information as possible when considering

whether an application met the call-in criteria. This would enable informed decisions to be made within the 21-day timeframe. He also reiterated the importance of monitoring the operation of the new arrangements and implementing improvements as the process became established.

Councillor Moriarty thanked Councillor Parish and the Regeneration and Development Panel for their consideration of the matter. He confirmed that all representations would be given careful consideration and acknowledged the importance of ensuring that relevant information was made available to Members at the earliest possible stage of the process.

The Chair thanked both Cabinet and the Regeneration and Development Panel for their consideration of the report. He expressed reassurance regarding the proposed operation of the scheme and welcomed the commitment to undertake a six-month review of its implementation.

RECOMMENDED:

Cabinet recommends to Full Council, that it:

1. Notes the revised Planning Scheme of Delegation attached at Appendix A.
2. Notes the consequential amendments to the Constitution, and the Planning Committee Terms of Reference (attached at Appendix B) and related procedural rules required to implement the National Scheme of Delegation.
3. Authorises the Assistant Director for Environment and Planning to make operational procedural changes to implement the National Scheme of Delegation.
4. Authorises the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Assistant Director for Environment and Planning, to make any necessary consequential amendments arising from the implementation of the National Scheme of Delegation.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To ensure the council is able to fulfil its planning decision-making duties in a legally compliant way.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

29 October 2026

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

For the period 17 September 2026 to 21 October 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Switch Together (previously Solar Together)

Installations for the customers that participated in the 2025 scheme are complete with a total of 29 customers installing solar panels via the scheme.

Registrations for the 2026/27 scheme closed with 505 expressing an interest in the installation of solar PV panels, battery storage and car chargers. Over the next few months householders will receive quotes and place orders. To date 44 have paid deposits and 24 have withdrawn. A level of drop out is expected as householders obtain comparative quotations, review their financing, consider other priorities, etc.

Mayor's Business Awards – Environmental Champion

Preparations for the 2027 business awards are underway with details announced in the Lynn News and the application portal live at Mayor's Business Awards 2027 - Home Page. This is the 38th Mayor's Business Awards and the final will be held at the King's Lynn Corn Exchange on Friday, 5 March 2027.

School Climate Champions

Work to develop the 2026/2027 scheme is underway alongside Norfolk Museums Service and its Gressenhall based team. Invitations to schools have been issued and 6 schools have committed to the project so far with further interest to be confirmed.

Carbon Audit

The 2023/24 carbon audit is available on our website and work is underway on the 2024/25 and 2025/26 audits. We are looking at processes to speed up and automate this and any data collection it requires.

Carbon Literacy Training

Work to screen the National Emergency Briefing on climate change is ongoing.

West Lynn Ferry

Norfolk County Council have raised a number of specific points concerning the operation and marketing of the Ferry in response to our request for a £500,000 matched funding contribution towards the renewal work. Borough Council

Officers replied on 9 October 2026 with reassurances that these matters are being taken seriously and that we are committed to work with NCC to secure the long-term future of the ferry service. To this end, the communications department are arranging to meet with the operator and develop a marketing strategy.

Topographical surveys of the landing structures have been commissioned as part of an ongoing programme to ensure operations safety until the replacement and repair works can be effected.

Preparations for a report to Cabinet, expected early 2027, are ongoing.

Village Green, South Lynn

The Town and Village Green application for South Lynn was unanimously approved by Norfolk County Council planning committee on 20 October 2026. The designation has generated significant media interest.



Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP)

Norfolk Climate Change Partnership (NCCP) The Partnership's next meeting which was scheduled for the 14 October 2026 is being rearranged. The regional Climate East annual conference took place on 15 October 2026.

Streetlighting Phase II

The majority of standard lanterns have now been upgraded with complete new LED heads.

Attention is now turning to the heritage lanterns, located at Hunstanton (Promenade, Esplanade Gardens, The Green, St Edmunds Terrace), the Walks, Tuesday Market Place and in and around the Quay.

99% of all upgrades are expected to be completed by end of November 2026.

Re:Fit

Panasonic and Finn Geotherm are working together to resolve issues with heat pump reliability as well as visibility via the Building Management Systems.

We have commissioned an independent Mechanical and Electrical consultant to prepare a report on the heat pump installations. This work has highlighted a lack of commissioning data, which should have been provided alongside the Operation & Maintenance manuals/health and safety file. Ameresco have been asked to provide this data.

We continue to press Ameresco/Finn Geotherm to deliver improvements on heat pump reliability.

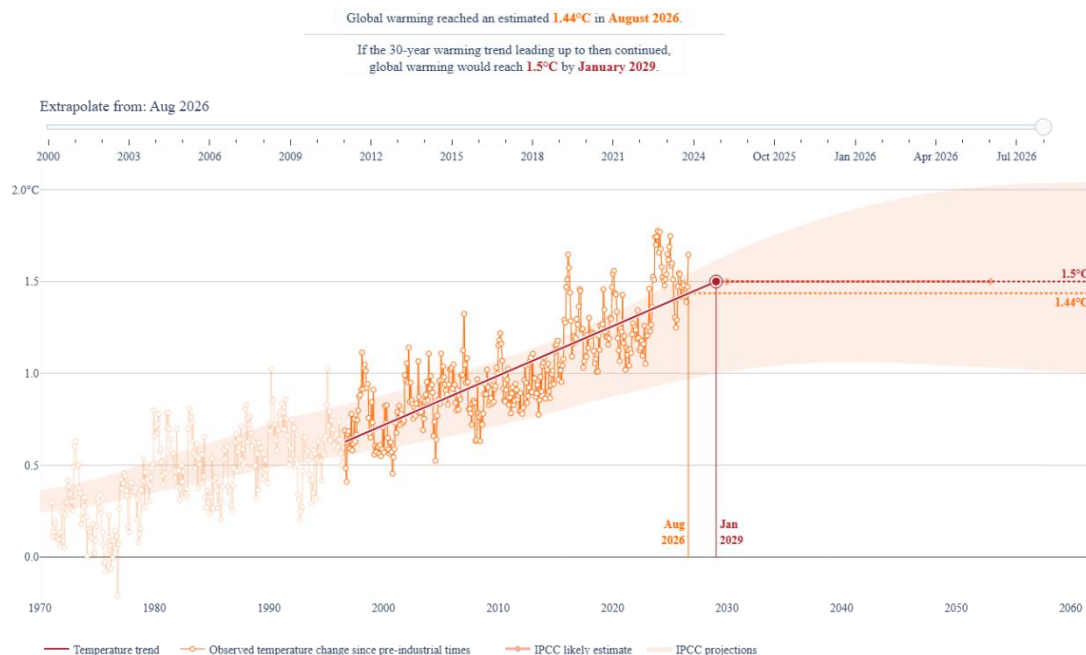
Solar Panels

Officers have authorisation from finance to proceed with the photovoltaic installations at KLIC and the Corn Exchange and a request for quotation is underway.

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.



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

September 2026 was the second-warmest September on record globally, with an average surface air temperature of 16.27°C, 0.11°C cooler than the record set in September 2023. September was about 1.63°C warmer than an estimate

of the September average for 1850-1900, the designated pre-industrial reference period. The average global temperature for the last 12 months (October 2025 to September 2026) was 1.50°C above the 1850-1900 pre-industrial average.

The average global sea surface temperature (SST) for September 2026 over 60°S to 60°N was 21.05°C, the highest for the month in the dataset, 0.13°C above the previous record set in September 2023 and **was only 0.02°C below the all-time record set in August 2026**. Since 19 June, the daily extra-polar SST has been the highest recorded for each calendar day. 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.

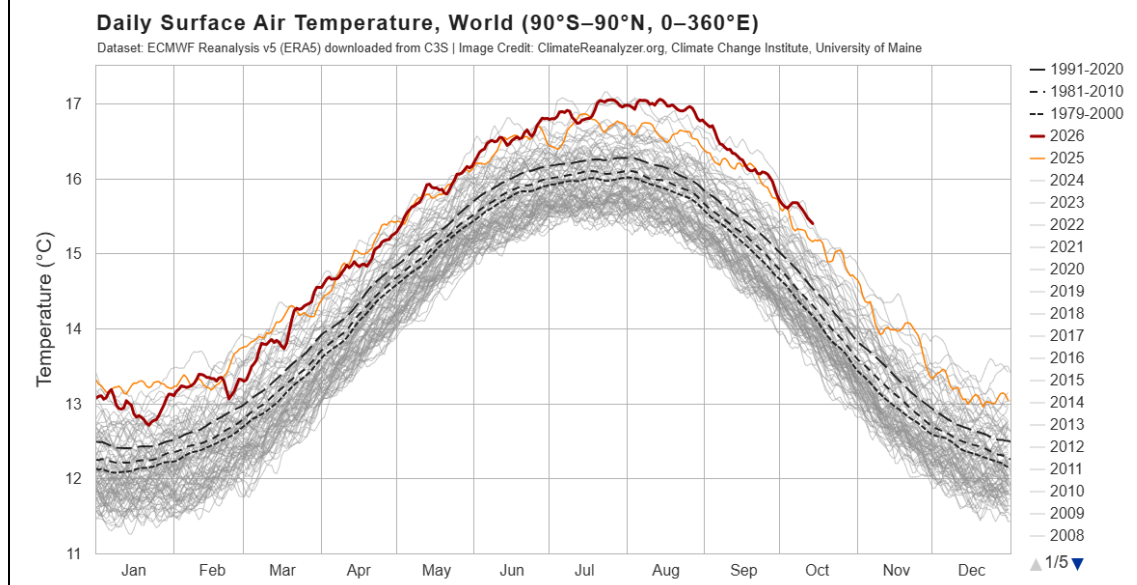
Data source: European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts - ERA5.

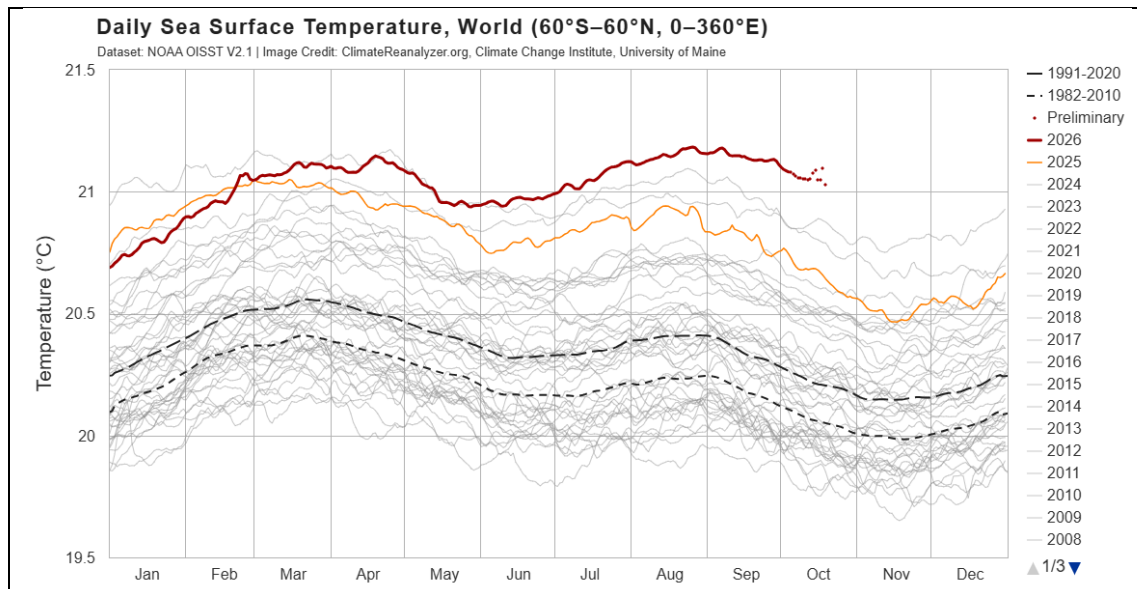
Intensification of El Niño. The monthly SST for the Niño 3.4 region reached an all-time high of 29.70°C in September, exceeding the previous record of 28.81°C set in December 1997. According to the World Meteorological Organization, El Niño is expected to intensify over the coming months, peaking towards the end of 2026 and continuing until at least February 2027.

Arctic sea ice extent for September 2026 was 5.3 million km², circa 9.7% (0.6 million km²) below the 1991–2020 average, the sixteenth-lowest monthly extent for August in the 48-year satellite record.

The average Antarctic sea ice extent for the month was 17.8 million km², about 6.3% (1.2 million km²) below the 1991–2020 average. This was the third-lowest September extent in the satellite record.

Data source: OSI SAF Sea Ice Index v2.3





2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

Beat Your Bills Roadshow
Fairstead Community Centre - 1.30pm - 5.30pm, Thursday 29 October

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Cabinet
 Cabinet Briefings
 Cabinet Sifting

Local Plan Task Group
 QEH – All Member Briefing
 Annual Climate East Conference
 King's Lynn IDB meeting
 Norfolk Parking Partnership Joint Committee (Substitute)
 Fairstead Recreation Ground – Wildflower Planting
 Joint Panel - QEH

Portfolio Holder Briefings and updates:

CEO Portfolio Update
 Climate Change Updates
 West Lynn Ferry Updates

Cabinet Members Report to Council

29th October 2026

Councillor Sue Lintern – Cabinet Member for Culture and Events

Report to Council for the period 12 th September to 19 th October

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

Summer Events Programme

The Borough Council's summer events programme has now concluded following an exceptionally successful season, offering a diverse range of free events across the Borough and providing something for residents and visitors of all ages and interests.

Hunstanton

Hunstanton welcomed the return of popular events, including Open Air Cinema – Movies on the Green, Family Fun Days, Beats by the Beach and Battle of the Bands. Alongside these established favourites, several new events were introduced and have been very well received.

Highlights included:

- Beer & Gin Festival: A successful event offering a wide variety of food and drink.
- Peter Piper Picked Some Litter: Introduced during the first week of the school holidays, this innovative event raised awareness of litter and the dangers it poses to wildlife, including discarded fishing nets and drinks can ring-pulls. The inflatable whale, which visitors could enter, proved a particular highlight for children and adults alike.
- Borrow, Play, Return: The first Hunstanton beach equipment borrowing box was launched, enabling children to borrow beach play equipment and return it after use.
- Water Safety Sessions: The Alive team delivered open-water swimming and water safety sessions, helping to educate children about the risks associated with swimming in the sea. This remains an important priority for both residents and visitors.
- Mad Tea Party: A new event designed to encourage community participation and strengthen local community spirit.
- Hunstanton Soap Box Derby: This hugely popular event attracted more than 55 entries. Minor changes to the course provided a fresh experience for competitors and spectators, with participants enjoying the challenge and the crowds turning out to support them.

The success of both established and new events demonstrates the value of continuing to develop the programme while retaining the activities that residents and visitors know and enjoy.

King's Lynn

King's Lynn hosted a similarly varied programme, including the Hanse Festival, followed by the Hanseatic Waterski Event, Folk in the Town, Soulful Sunday, Mods & Rockers and a series of Music in the Marketplace events celebrating music from the 1940s through to the 1980s. Classic Car Day also attracted interest from residents and visitors.

In addition to the Council's own events, the Borough supported a wide range of activities delivered by external organisations. These included King's Lynn Festival, Festival Too, the Vintage Fair, food festivals, Heritage Open Day and numerous events in The Walks.

It is important to recognise the breadth of the events offer across the town. While the Council delivers its own varied programme, the support provided to external organisers is equally valuable. Assistance with traffic management, health and safety, event logistics and post-event cleaning enables other organisations to concentrate on delivering their events safely and successfully. This partnership approach helps maximise the number and diversity of activities available to the public, supports local organisations and contributes to the vitality of King's Lynn as a destination for residents and visitors.

King's Lynn Heritage Open Day showcased an impressive range of historic buildings, cultural venues and heritage sites across the town, with at least 18,000 recorded visits to the properties that provided visitor numbers. The most popular venues were Town Hall & Guildhall, with 1,876 visitors, followed by Stories of Lynn (1,529), the Minster (1,495), Guildhall of St George (1,059) and the Valiant Sailor, 2 Nelson Street (1,041). Other well-attended venues included Hanse House (873), True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum (852), Red Mount Chapel (828) and Woolmarket House (773). The event offered visitors a valuable opportunity to explore buildings of historical and architectural interest, discover local stories and engage with King's Lynn's rich heritage. Visitor numbers should be treated as a minimum, as not all participating properties had the time to record attendance or chose to do so. Several venues also opened for limited hours. Heritage Open Day is a project of King's Lynn Civic Society and is organised by a dedicated team of just four volunteers. The Borough Council is pleased to support this valuable initiative, which celebrates the town's heritage, encourages people to explore its historic buildings and helps promote King's Lynn as a destination for visitors. The event demonstrates the important contribution that volunteers make to celebrating and promoting the town's heritage and encouraging people to explore its historic buildings.

Guildhall Outreach and Learning Programme

While the Guildhall remains under redevelopment, the learning and engagement programme has continued through outreach activities delivered at venues across the Borough.

Shakespeare Week took place earlier in the season, followed by the popular Dragon Arts programme. Activities were delivered at Stories of Lynn, Downham Market Library, Gaywood Library, Hunstanton Library and The Beacon in North Lynn.

The programme has provided opportunities for younger residents to explore their creativity and imagination in accessible community settings. The imaginative work produced by participants, including underwater dragon lairs, has been particularly inspiring.

This outreach approach ensures that the Guildhall's educational and cultural offer continues to reach communities while redevelopment work is ongoing.

Museum Service Update

The museum service has enjoyed a busy and productive summer, with 559 young people attending educational and theatre events, including the popular *Rampage through the Iron Age* activity.

A young people's takeover week also gave participants the opportunity to curate a mini-exhibition, providing valuable hands-on experience and encouraging greater engagement with local heritage.

The service has now established a monthly home educators programme, alternating between Stories of Lynn and Lynn Museum. This provides a regular opportunity for home-educated children to access learning activities and engage with the Borough's collections and heritage.

Councillors can play an important role in promoting these opportunities through their local networks and helping to raise awareness of the programme among home-educating families.

Review of the Summer Events Programme

A review meeting will take place shortly to evaluate the summer events programme, identify what worked well and consider where improvements can be made for future years.

The safety of everyone attending Council events remains paramount. The review will consider how the Council can continue to deliver events that are safe, accessible, enjoyable and attractive to a broad audience.

I would like to place on record my thanks to the events officers and wider Council teams whose hard work makes this programme possible. The planning, coordination and behind-the-scenes preparation required to deliver events of this scale is considerable, and the success of the summer programme reflects their professionalism, commitment and dedication.

WyrdFest – Autumn Cultural Programme

As the summer season concludes, the Council is turning its attention to the autumn and winter programme, with WyrdFest providing an exciting new addition to the cultural calendar.

Developed in partnership with Culture Babylon, WyrdFest is a month-long programme celebrating the strange, mythical and deliciously dark. Through film screenings, storytelling, exhibitions, workshops and talks, the festival aims to

attract new audiences and support the Council's wider ambition to increase out-of-season tourism.

The festival launched with the exhibition *All of Us Witches*, exploring King's Lynn's connections with the witch trials of the seventeenth century. The exhibition is being held at Stories of Lynn throughout October. The exhibition examines the experiences of women from King's Lynn and West Norfolk who were accused of witchcraft, condemned and, tragically, executed. It explores how fear, superstition, poverty and social tensions could lead to devastating consequences, inviting visitors to consider how ordinary members of a community could become the targets of suspicion and persecution. The exhibition offers an important opportunity to explore local history while reflecting on wider themes of prejudice, social responsibility and the consequences of scapegoating.

The Wyrdfest programme continued with a talk exploring F. R. Buckley, the writer, journalist, actor and painter associated with King's Lynn's Exorcist's House. The event also saw the launch of an updated edition of the *Norfolk Coast: Myths & Legends* booklet, celebrating the folklore and coastal legends of the area. Later in the month, activities will include a potions workshop and escape room events, offering further opportunities to engage audiences through imaginative and interactive experiences.

Wyrdfest represents an important step in developing the Borough's cultural offer beyond the traditional summer season. By bringing together heritage, creativity and distinctive local stories, the festival has the potential to attract new visitors, encourage local people to explore their heritage and support local businesses during a quieter period in the tourism calendar. We hope to build on this success and develop Wyrdfest further in the coming years, establishing it as a distinctive and valued addition to the Borough's cultural events programme.

History of the Borough Project

Work continues on the History of the Borough Project, which will create a lasting historical record of the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk. Originally commissioned in anticipation of the conclusion of the Borough Council through Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the project has evolved following the Government's decision to pause the LGR programme. The film will now focus on documenting the Council's history, achievements, challenges and influence over the past 50 years.

Through interviews, archive material and reflections from people who have helped shape the Borough, the film will create an accessible record of the authority's contribution to local communities and its role in the economic, social and physical development of the area.

The project provides a valuable opportunity to capture the experiences and institutional knowledge of those who have worked within and alongside the Council, preserving stories that might otherwise be lost.

The finished film is intended to serve as a lasting resource for future generations, celebrating the Council's legacy and helping residents understand how the organisation has evolved and influenced the Borough over five decades.

Crabbs Abbey Pumping Station – Heritage Opportunity

Our Cultural Champion, Cllr Alex Ware, has highlighted an exciting opportunity for the Council to acquire historic pumping station equipment from Crabbs Abbey, dating from 1948, including Gwynne pumps and Ruston diesel engines. The equipment formed part of the post-war infrastructure that helped protect King's Lynn and the surrounding fenland from flooding. With the station due for demolition as part of wider drainage improvement works, there is an opportunity to preserve an important part of the Borough's engineering and drainage heritage. The equipment could provide an educational and cultural resource, helping to tell the story of fenland drainage, flood protection and the engineering that has supported local communities, agriculture and economic activity for generations.

We are currently undertaking careful consideration of transport, storage, conservation, potential contamination and future display costs. However, this represents an incredible opportunity to preserve an important part of our local heritage, and we are hopeful that the project will come to fruition.

Cultural Steering Group

The Cultural Steering Group continues to develop its role in supporting collaboration across the Borough's cultural sector.

A dedicated website has now been established, with the longer-term ambition of developing it into a digital platform and directory for creative and cultural organisations. This will help improve visibility, encourage networking and make it easier for organisations to identify opportunities for collaboration.

The group is also revisiting the possibility of holding an 11th Hour event early next year, with further discussions required to establish the format and arrangements. These developments support the wider objective of building a more connected cultural sector and strengthening the relationship between the Council and local creative organisations.

Volunteer Recognition – December Celebration

Volunteers continue to make an invaluable contribution to the Borough's cultural and heritage offer, supporting activities and events across the whole of West Norfolk, not just King's Lynn. At No. 29 King Street, volunteers have contributed more than 1,700 hours, while the Red Mount has welcomed over 2,500 visitors. These figures relate to just two locations in King's Lynn, giving an indication of the scale of volunteer support across the Borough. When the many volunteers who help deliver the Council's events and activities throughout West Norfolk are also taken into account, the overall contribution in time, commitment and community support is immense. To recognise and celebrate this contribution, an Oscars-themed celebration is in the early stages of planning for December. The event will thank volunteers from across the Borough, alongside workplace students and apprentices, for their commitment and support. It will provide an opportunity to celebrate their achievements and acknowledge the important role they play in

supporting the Council's services, cultural activities and events throughout West Norfolk.

Norfolk Arts Forum

Recent discussions at the Norfolk Arts Forum highlighted the importance of ensuring that cultural organisations remain relevant, accessible and responsive to changing audiences.

A speaker from the Sainsbury Centre emphasised the need for museums and galleries to evolve, moving beyond a solely preservation-focused approach towards creating meaningful connections between collections, communities and contemporary life. Art and heritage can be living, engaging experiences that encourage participation and dialogue.

The Forum also considered the *Survive to Thrive* project, which highlighted the benefits of closer collaboration between culture, the creative industries and tourism.

The creative industries encompass areas such as marketing, branding and digital services, which offer opportunities for economic growth and innovation. Culture, meanwhile, can make a significant contribution to health, wellbeing and the quality of life of local communities. There is clear potential to strengthen these connections, ensuring that cultural activity contributes not only to the visitor economy but also to wider social, economic and community outcomes. This reinforces the importance of joined-up working across the Council's cultural, tourism and economic development priorities, and of building stronger partnerships with organisations throughout Norfolk.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

Over the coming months, the portfolio will focus on:

- Reviewing the summer events programme and identifying improvements for future delivery.
- Continuing to develop the autumn and winter events offer, including Wyrdfest, the highly successful Fawkes in the Walks and the Christmas Lights Switch-On, to attract visitors, support local businesses and strengthen the Borough's cultural offer beyond the traditional summer season.
- Maintaining accessible learning and engagement opportunities through the Guildhall outreach programme and museum service.
- Progressing the History of the Borough film project to preserve and celebrate the Council's institutional history.
- Supporting the work of the Cultural Steering Group in shaping the Borough's cultural priorities and future direction.
- Recognising the contribution of volunteers, workplace students and apprentices in supporting the Council's cultural activities, heritage sites and events across West Norfolk.

- Strengthening collaboration between culture, tourism, the creative industries and wider community services.

The portfolio continues to support an ambitious and varied cultural offer across the Borough, combining high-profile events with heritage, education, community engagement and partnership working. These activities contribute to local pride, community wellbeing and the visitor economy, while enhancing the Borough's appeal as a place to live, work and visit.

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL
29 October 2026

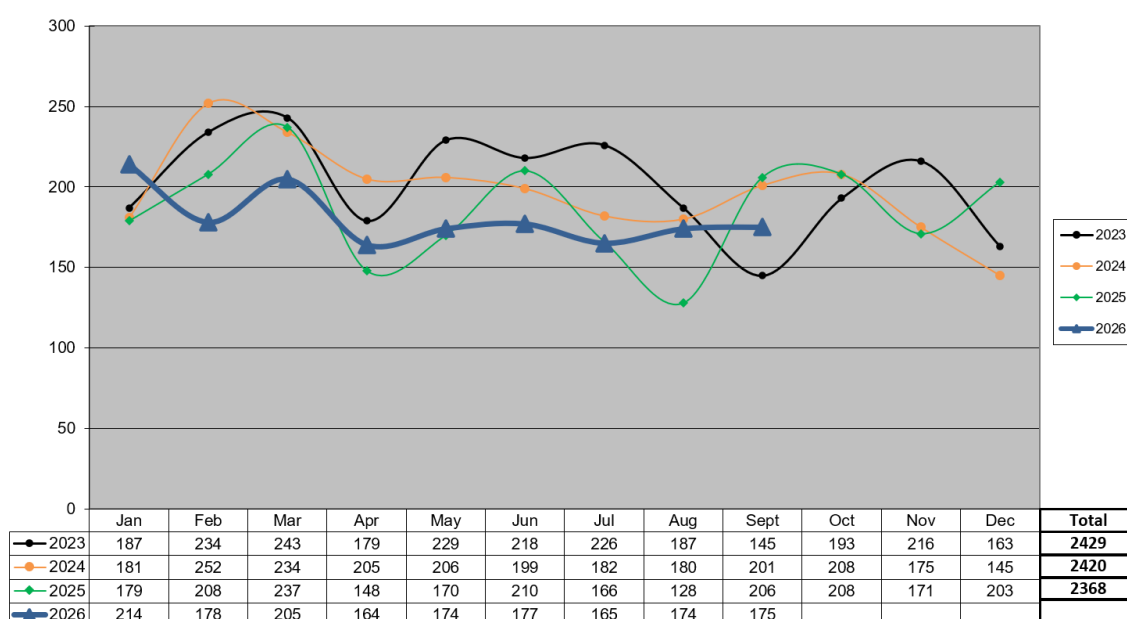
COUNCILLOR JIM MORIARTY - CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING & LICENSING

MY THANKS TO OFFICERS FOR THEIR WORK TOWARDS COMPILING THIS REPORT

Planning and Discharge of Conditions applications received

Application numbers at the end of September are down slightly compared to the same period last year, 26 applications.

Planning and discharge of condition applications received



Major and Minor dwelling applications and householder applications received comparison

	1/10/23 – 30/9/24	1/10/24 – 30/9/25	1/10/25 – 30/9/26
No. of Major dwelling applications rec'd	17	23	23
No. of Minor dwelling applications rec'd	228	273	275
No. of Householder applications rec'd	604	564	536
Total	849	860	834

*Minor dwelling applications = up to 10 units

*Major dwelling applications = over 10 units

2025/26 performance for determining planning applications 1/10/25 – 30/9/26

	National target	Performance
Major	60%	94%
Non – Major	70%	91%

Appeal Performance – appeal decisions made by The Planning Inspectorate between 1/10/25 – 30/9/26. This measure is different to the ‘quality of decision’ measure.

	Officer delegated		Committee overturns		Total	
Appeals	Dismissed	Allowed	Dismissed	Allowed	Dismissed	Allowed
Planning	38	7	2	5	40	12
	84%	16%	29%	71%	77%	23%
Enforcement	4	3				
	57%	43%				

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 August 2026 is calculated as follows:

Planning applications determined by the Local Planning Authority between 01/1/2024 to 31/12/2025 (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 = 30/9/2026.

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
2541	21	0.83%

Revenue income for financial year 2026/27 (Planning and Discharge income)

Figures are based on a full year projected income budget of £1,453,750.

Projected	Actual	Variance with projected
April 26 – September 2026	April 26 – September 2026	
£726,875	£896,447	+£169,572

Planning Enforcement Service Performance

KPI - 85% of new enforcement cases actioned within 12 weeks of receipt

2025		2026	
August	91.5%	January	91.2%
September	94.6%	February	87.0%
October	87.5%	March	100%
November	88.2%	April	97.9%
December	94.1%	May	91.8%
June	87.3%	June	87.3%
		July	86.7%
		August	80.5%
		September	74.6%

Set out below is a breakdown in relation to cases received and closed for the period 1/10/25 – 30/9/26 and the current 'live' cases.

- Number of cases received incl. high hedge 585
- Total number of cases closed 588
- Total number of current 'live' cases 310

Next Local Plan

Local Plan Timetable

Provided below is an illustration of our Next Local Plan timetable. The next formal step is the publication of our Gateway 1 self-assessment. Overall, we are currently working towards the creation of a whole Draft Local Plan and for this to be published for a full public consultation next year:



Further details about the Next Local Plan can, including the full timetable can be viewed online [here](#).

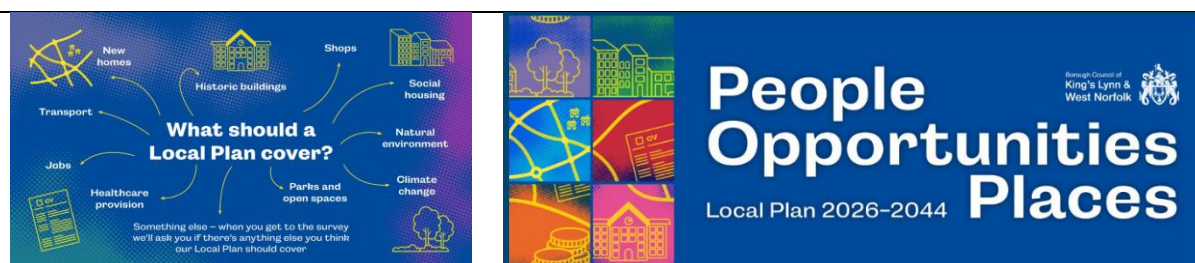
Local Plan Progress

I'd like to take this opportunity to encourage all Members to view the presentation and recording of the last Local Plan Task Group which provides the details of this and the initial feedback from the Scoping Consultation, available [here](#). Below is a flavour:

- We have an adopted Local Plan (2025) with an interactive version and policies map
- We have a healthy 5-year housing land supply
- We have passed the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) with a 100% score
- Governance Arrangements agreed and in place for the next Local Plan
- Local Plan Task Group (LPTG) Terms of Reference (ToR) revised, agreed, and in place
- Members all briefed
- Parish / Town Council's briefed
- Planning Policy Team resourced with a Policy Manager, 2 Principals, 1 Senior Planner, a Project Support Officer, and 2 Graduate Planners
- Majority of the evidence base procured and underway or in the process of
- Many more of the in-housework well advanced
- Esri software in place and a bespoke Artificial Intelligence (AI) product to assist with appraisals
- Some funding secured from MHCLG
- Call for sites completed with some 800+ sites
- Overall, we have 50+ workstreams live currently
- Built excellent working relationships and joint working with other departments, and with other Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) especially across Norfolk through the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (NSPF)
- The Planning Advisory Service (PAS) have requested that officers present to other LPAs as they have been impressed
- A number of LPAs want to meet with officers as they too have been impressed
- Raised the profile of the Local Plan massively
- Received a thank you letter from MHCLG
- **And this all before the 30-month time scale actually starts!**

Local Plan Scoping Consultation





We ran our Scoping Consultation during September. The focus was on what people think should be considered when preparing our Next Local Plan and how they would like to be engaged. We also offered the opportunity to comment on the sites we have received so far, and to submit further sites for consideration.

We held 12 events over 15 days including, 4 online drop-in sessions, 2 at the College of West Anglia, 2 at the Food Bank, 2 at King's Lynn, 1 at Downham Market, and 1 at Hunstanton.

The response was **phenomenal** with more than 300 responses to the online survey, we spoke with nearly 300 people in person, received more than 450 emails and had more than 1,500 comments on the interactive site map.

I would like to thank every person who took the time to engage with us, as well as the officer team who went to great lengths to give people the opportunity to take part. We'll use these views as part of the evidence base for drafting our Next Local Plan.

Neighbourhood Planning Update

As of October 2026, there are 25 "made" (adopted) Neighbourhood Plans in place, covering 28 parishes. This includes the Walpole Cross Keys Neighbourhood Plan Review 2022-2038, passed at referendum on 24 September 2026, with 100% of votes cast in favour of the Neighbourhood Plan, and adopted on 6 October 2026. This replaces the first Walpole Cross Keys Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2026, made (adopted) in October 2017

A date has now been set for the Docking Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2039; 26 November 2026. If passed at referendum, the Docking Neighbourhood Plan will be "made" by early December 2026. Further 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 autumn 2025 – August 2026; referendum, 26 November 2026; adoption by early December 2026
Shouldham Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040	Submitted by Shouldham Parish Council for independent examination, 9 October 2026 . "Regulation 16" consultation, December 2026/ January 2027; examination winter/ spring 2027; referendum summer 2027

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). Possible Regulation 14 consultation by mid-2027.
Great Massingham	Neighbourhood Area first designated June 2021. During 2025-2026 moves to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan have been revived (since summer 2025). Possible Regulation 14 consultation by spring/summer-2027.
Ingoldisthorpe	Various draft evidence documents under preparation (e.g. Design Codes, Housing Needs Assessment) prepared, 2024-2025; possible Regulation 14 consultation by autumn 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 winter/spring 2027.
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; Sedgeford

Overall, the Walpole Cross Keys Neighbourhood Plan Review 2022-2038 is the first neighbourhood plan passed at referendum and adopted during the 2026-2027 financial year. It is anticipated that the Docking Neighbourhood Plan will also be adopted by December 2026.

The Shouldham Neighbourhood Plan 2025-2040 was submitted on 9 October 2026, and it is anticipated this will go to referendum during the 2027-2028 financial year. Other active emerging Neighbourhood Plans (Dersingham; Great Massingham; Ingoldisthorpe; Pentney) may come forward to referendum during the 2027-2028 financial year. Hunstanton Town Council and North Runcton, West Winch and Sedgeford Parish Councils are also all pursuing reviews of their Neighbourhood Plans. However, the timeframes for these are entirely dependent on the scope and extent of any review.

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.

The revised NPPF was published on 17 August 2026 ([National Planning Policy Framework.pdf](#)). This reiterates the Government's commitment to neighbourhood planning. Policies PM17 (Examining neighbourhood plans) and decision-making policy S6 (Neighbourhood plans and the presumption [in favour of sustainable development]) explain how it is expected that neighbourhood plans will continue to be examined and used in decision-making, respectively.

Development Management update

New Planning Scheme of Delegation

The new National Scheme of Delegation for Planning is coming into force on the 31 October 2026. Local authorities must comply with the new legislative requirements, otherwise they risk unlawful decisions from occurring, which could be subject to judicial review, with the associated financial and reputational risks that brings.

A report was considered by Cabinet on 13th October 2026 <https://democracy.west-norfolk.gov.uk/documents/s86845/National%20Planning%20Scheme%20of%20Delegation.pdf> which sets out the steps necessary to bring it into force through amending the council's current constitution, as well as setting up internal processes to ensure decision-making is not stalled, and there is as smooth a transfer to the new system as possible.

In summary the revised arrangements will:

- Delegate to officers all planning applications and functions that are required to be determined under Schedule 1 of the Regulations.
- Establish a presumption of officer determination for Schedule 2 applications, unless they are referred to Planning Committee in accordance with the Regulations.
- Designate the Assistant Director for Environment and Planning as the Council's Nominated Officer for the purposes of the Regulations, with appropriate provision for substitutes.
- Designate the Chair of the Planning Committee as the Council's Nominated Member, with appropriate provision for substitutes.
- Introduce a formal referral process for Local Members for the 'Gateway Test', through which the Nominated Officer and Nominated Member may determine whether a Schedule 2 application raises issues of sufficient economic, social, environmental or planning significance to warrant determination by Planning Committee.
- Remove and replace any existing local schemes that are inconsistent with the requirements of the National Scheme of Delegation.
- Introduce a further triage system to ensure the nominated officer and member are not overwhelmed, given the potential number of schedule 2 applications in accordance with the national guidance.

Training will be provided to all Members on 29th October 2026 on the new Planning Scheme of Delegation and in particular the Member Referral Request process including proforma and guidance.

Staffing

Lynette Fawkes (Principal Conservation Officer) is officially leaving the authority on 30th October 2026. Interviews for her replacement were held on 14th October 2026 and the post

was offered and the successful candidate accepted on 16th October 2026, subject to the usual pre-employment checks and notice period.

Clare Malcomson (Senior Planner) and Phoebe Pigott (Graduate Planner) left the authority in September 2026. The vacancies have been advertised and candidates selected for interview which take place 4th & 5th November 2026.

Nature Restoration Fund

On 18 December 2025, the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 (“the Act”) came into force, marking an important milestone in the government’s long term growth strategy. Designed to reduce delays and costs, the Act aims to accelerate construction and development across the UK by removing perceived barriers in the planning process. The Act establishes the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF). The NRF will be delivered through Environmental Development Plans (EDPs).

Environmental Delivery Plans

Environmental Delivery Plans (EDPs) are now being developed by Natural England in collaboration with partners. The overwhelming majority of EDPs are expected to be voluntary, providing an action plan (up to 10 years) which will establish the conservation measures needed to address the impact of development on a protected site or on a named protected species. EDPs will be prepared using the best available data, and they will only be used where the science gives confidence that the conservation measures can achieve the required “Overall Improvement Test.”

Conservation measures within an EDP must be evidence-based and geographically targeted. All EDPs will be subject to public consultation (The Norfolk EDP is out for consultation now until 27 October) and will then need to be approved by the Secretary of State. Once an EDP is in place in a specific area, developers can choose to meet their environmental obligations for the environmental features covered by that EDP by paying a levy, which Natural England will then use to deliver the conservation measures set out in the plan. Where EDPs are not in place, for example where there are irreplaceable habitats, or developers choose not to use them, existing Habitats and other Regulations will continue to apply. EDPs will have regard to wider strategic plans and measures, such as Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

The measures in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill set out the detailed operation of the Nature Restoration Fund but, at its core, there are 5 key phases:

1. **Framing the EDP** – EDPs will define the environmental impacts they cover, such as nutrient pollution or the impact development might have on a protected species. EDPs will be spatially specific with clear maps setting out where development is covered by an EDP and what scale of development the EDP can support.
2. **Designing the measures** – EDPs will set out the suite of conservation measures that will be deployed to more than address the impact of development across a given area. For example, an EDP covering nutrient pollution will set out how the combined effect of the conservation measures will go beyond the current expectations of nutrient neutrality and lead to an improvement in water quality.
3. **Setting the levy rate** – A simple charging schedule, sufficient to cover the costs of the conservation measures, will be payable by developers to meet the relevant legal obligation associated with the impacts addressed by the EDP.

4. **Consultation and approval** – in developing an EDP, Natural England will benefit from views captured through consultation before the EDP is submitted to the Secretary of State for approval. When considering the EDP, the Secretary of State will be bound by a new legal test to ensure that the conservation measures outweigh the negative effect of development.
5. **Delivering on the EDP**– once the EDP is in place, Natural England will have the necessary powers to use funds collected to implement the conservation measures. They will then monitor the impact of the measures to ensure they are working as expected and make any amendments to the EDP that may be necessary.

Norfolk is in the first set of 16 EDPs to come forward. The Environment Development Plan - Nutrient Pollution - Norfolk is at the consultation stage which will close on 27 October 2026. Consultation available here: [Nutrient Pollution – draft Norfolk Environmental Delivery Plan consultation - Defra Consultations](#). The government released the first set of information and guidance on how EDP will work on 1 September 2026 on:

- [Environmental Delivery Plans](#) – which set out a programme of conservation measures to address specific impacts of development in a defined area.
- [Using the nature restoration levy](#) to discharge specific environmental obligations.
- The [enforcement actions to be taken](#) for missed or late nature restoration levy payments and the appeals process for developers.

You will be aware that there is an established Nutrient Market within Norfolk which operates in a similar way - developers pay for credits to offset their nutrient obligations. This independent market will still continue to operate as it currently does but will of course now be in competition with the EDP option. The Norfolk EDP is voluntary so the developer will have the choice to go down the traditional Habitat Regulation Route of the EDP route. The advantage for developers of using the EDP route is that the Units are likely to be cheaper than those currently on the market and purchase of Units will be a condition of consent. This differs from the current way of operating as Units must be purchased before determination. Where there is more than one impact it could be more cost effective to use the traditional route in which nutrient mitigation could be stacked to help offset other obligations i.e. BNG.

The new regime is most closely aligned with the Norfolk District Level Licencing scheme for Great Crested Newts as it will operate in a similar way once the EDP is approved.

LICENSING

- Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026. Whilst there is no news on the introduction date for the Local Authority licensing regime (premises and people), some measures are being introduced as follows -
 1. From 29 October 2026 –The age of sale for all vaping and nicotine products will be 18, with offences covering under-age sales, proxy purchasing, free distribution and substantial discounting. Ban on vending machines.
 2. From 1 January 2027 - Tobacco retailers will have to display a notice reading: 'It is illegal to sell tobacco products to anyone born on or after 1 January 2009'.
 3. FPN's for non-compliance – Trading Standards

- One of the New Combined Driver licence applications refused by Members of The Licensing & Appeals Board on 27th August has submitted an Appeal to Magistrates' Court. No hearing date has been set as yet.
- Hannah Shackcloth joined the Licensing team from Planning Enforcement on 28th September, replacing Johanna Riches (who moved to Clean Up).
- The Institute of Licensing has introduced a five-year strategic plan to enhance professional standards within licensing and work towards securing Royal Charter status, bringing the profession in line with bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.
- Home Office alcohol licensing statistics (2025/26) published on 1st October: England and Wales had 968,400 personal licences, 227,300 premises licences and 149,600 TENs (up 2%), with premises licence reviews increasing by around 30%. Further information and full report available here - [Alcohol licensing, England and Wales, April 2025 to March 2026 - GOV.UK](#)
- New gaming machine standards: From June 2027, new Category B gaming machines will be required to provide players with gambling management tools and session information, support operators in identifying gambling harm, and introduce safer game design measures, including banning misleading celebrations of losses and features that speed up play, following recommendations from the 2023 Gambling Act Review White Paper.
- UKHospitality high street blueprint: UKHospitality has called for licensing and planning reform, including full implementation of the Licensing Reform Taskforce recommendations, arguing that a more flexible, growth-focused regulatory framework would support hospitality-led regeneration, encourage investment, boost local economies and help revitalise town and city centres.
- Hospitality tax burden: New analysis commissioned by the British Retail Consortium found that hospitality businesses face the highest effective tax burden of any major UK sector, paying 82p in business taxes for every £1 of pre-tax profit, prompting industry calls for business rates reform and tax reductions to support investment, job creation and high street regeneration.

Cabinet Members Report to Council

29th October 2026

Councillor Chris Morley Cabinet Member for Finance

Report to Council for the period 24th September to 19th October
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1 Progress on Portfolio Matters
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This reporting timescale has not fallen in a particularly opportune period for advising Council of current and forecast figures. There has been and is, an intensive spell of analysis and reporting. We have had to meet a tight timetable for the Annual Statement of Accounts (see below) and at the same time analyse the ½ year figures, start on the Medium-Term Financial Plan and adjudicate a labour intensive, initial, Community Projects Fund Grant.

Members will recall that we introduced this (£500K) opportunity as we had some headroom in our finances and offered this sum for communities which, ordinarily, may not be able, in this period, to attract, readily, sums from CIL Precepts, Reserves or KLAC discussions.

The scheme was also conceived to help Members in helping, their communities in a tangible way and would be supported in evaluation by a newly formed Community Projects Fund and Budget Setting Task Group, with representation across the political grouping.

Project submissions were due by 2nd October and the Task Group met on 16th October and of the 48 projects submitted, 34 have been recommended for acceptance by Cabinet, at a total cost of £411,362.

Because of the time that preparation and evaluation through this Community process would take, the Leader asked us to find a small sum of money from Reserves to pay for an emergency response to community issues. We set aside £250K for emergencies but with a sign off by Cabinet Member Finance and 2 Statutory Officers. So far £20,182 has been authorised for release to address 3 issues. The other element of the aforementioned Task Group is to help with budget setting and to judge the benefits of schemes to help communities or residents as the cost of living rises. Ideas from

Members are due in by 6th November and will be reviewed by the Task Group at a meeting scheduled for 26th November.

½ Year Results

These will be available shortly. We are examining in detail our outturn forecasts. I reported at Q1 that there were strains on our budgets through inflation and physical maintenance needs. Our productivity and efficiency programme was also not delivering what we expected. We asked for extra efforts to bring figures back in line before we reported on areas of potential expenditure above budget. Q2 will have to show our best and realistic estimates with the appropriate reasons for any negative positions. Hopefully, these figures can be posted before the October Council meeting.

STATEMENT of ACCOUNTS

Our external auditors, EY, have a full team allocated and have been assessing, from 5th October, around 150 submissions of working papers from our Finance team. The audit is expected to be completed before the festive break.

The Government's back stop date for publication by Local Authorities is 31st January and an Audit Committee meeting has been scheduled for 19th January to review both an audit report and the Statement of Accounts 25/26.

To date, feedback from the external auditors has been positive and I trust, is more than a fair reflection of the extent of the extra resource and quality of working papers we have committed to ensure the Government targets of getting, nationwide, public documents published back on track post, believe it or not, Covid. We are meeting that commitment.

The Draft statement of Accounts is available on the internet and those who click on the covering photograph will recognise a form of irony with the content of the picture and our desire to squeeze as much headroom for helping communities, as we can, from our available budget.

PROCUREMENT

The Procurement Team has continued to deliver a strong programme of work, managing a large portfolio of projects while supporting services across the Council.

Alongside delivering new procurements, the 100 non-compliant suppliers spend is being addressed, identifying opportunities to improve contractual compliance either by approved frameworks, open tenders with a focus on local and SME engagement and to strengthen future governance and maximise value for money. This work is helping to reduce procurement risk and ensure expenditure is aligned with Council policies and procurement regulations.

The team has also continued to focus on forward planning and upcoming contract renewals, supporting departments to develop effective procurement strategies.

Current projects include:

- West Norfolk Property Ltd's tender for Management of Private Rental Housing is in the final stages of contract award
- Exploration of alternative suppliers for electricity and gas supplies to for possible better prices
- Council Tax/NNDR & associated printing and mailing contract – looking at possible improvements and increase use of technology

Procurements in Numbers -

- 12 projects in final draft stage
- 1 advertised tender
- 2 procurements under evaluation
- 19 projects reaching contract signature stage
- 4 at contract award and standstill stage

And 49 live projects to be progressed.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

By the time this report is in the public domain we will have adjudicated the submissions for further awards granted under our annual small grants process.

For ease of reference, these awards have budgets of £15K revenue and £50k capital. For this year we have reduced the match funding

capital requirement to a minimum of 50%. We have also supplemented our total “pot” by £50K from the WINS Community Fund. This fund is made up from the 10p in the £ from those entering the WINS lottery or £0.50p for those tickets where the purchaser’s cause is this council.

For those whose faith and/or beliefs permit, this lottery is a fun way to have a very small waver, £1 per ticket, with half of your ticket money going to a worthy, local cause, (which can be this Council). Full details are on our internet.

Cabinet Members Report to Council

October 2026

Councillor Jo Rust Cabinet Member for People and Communities

For the period - 14th September to 21st October

Progress on Portfolio Matters – Creating Communities

I attended a Garden Wildlife Competition on 15th September where Cllr Devulapalli and our Mayor presented awards to the winners. There were a variety of different categories, and we got to glimpse pictures of the winning gardens. There was a strong show of the gardening community, and it highlighted that communities come in various forms.

Food for thought has restarted in Upwell. Disappointingly I've not been able to attend so far, but I know that the local councillor for the area has been. It's still in my dairy and I'm keen to go soon to see how it's brought the local community together.

I attended the opening of a new training house run by the Purfleet Trust. The house had been entirely refurbished using thrifted and second-hand items and showed exactly how people can build a beautiful home on a budget. I was genuinely moved at the thought of how this home would transform the lives of the people who would live there who have endured hardship and challenges that none of us would want to imagine.

Partnerships with Health

Like many others, I attended the AGM of the QEH in September. I had lobbied the CEO to move the event from the QEH board room to a larger venue in order that more people could attend and register their significant concerns about the review of services currently being offered at our hospital. There were at least two local MPs in attendance as well as many members of the public and councillors. Everyone who spoke expressed their concerns.

Skills

The tech team who has been contracted to deliver our Hackathon event which will follow the tech skills sessions have managed to secure a representative from Google to attend the final session in November, which is quite a coup and will encourage our young people to look out to the wider potentials available to them via tech. We're also looking to embed social value into the contracts on the back of the new hospital programme and the West Winch developments which will encompass tech skills. A work experience portal has been set up by Norfolk and Suffolk called Careers Connected which enables employers to log what they can offer to a young person looking for work experience. It also allows the employer to log all the documentation that they need to produce when offering a work placement and means that they'll only

have to do it once. A new careers strategy is being produced, and we want to ensure that it's place based, not focussed on Norwich. National Manufacturing Day was on 24th September and was extremely well attended with over 140 students visiting companies to see what they had to offer. This is about raising aspiration and increasing opportunities. We are embedding skills into our Marmot Report as good skills and employment lead to better health outcomes. I attended the annual Open Roads award ceremony where the achievements of young people were celebrated. Many of the young people would not have gained a qualification had they not attended Open Road. It's an organisation that supports young people with skills including motor mechanics and building.

Housing and Homelessness

I met with officers to hear about the amendments being proposed for our homelessness and rough sleeping strategy for 2024 – 2029. This is not a rewrite, but a refresh based on the changes that have been made due to the success of the work already undertaken. We had a requirement to revise our action plan, but it's good practice to, two years after the original launch. Our strategy had an associated action plan which was the vehicle to deliver the changes and the work needed to be done. But not all strategies did, which was a surprise to me. We continue to use lived experience to guide us. I attended a Home First Event hosted by the 5 Norfolk and Suffolk registered housing providers who make up the partnership. They set up to be able to speak to the elected mayor with one voice and while a SMA is currently uncertain, the work that they've done has put them in front if it does go ahead. We heard that the main problems with housing were related to damp and cold, overheating, overcrowding, housing insecurity and fuel poverty – of which 109,358 households experience. There were 1307 excess winter deaths due to cold housing and there are 108335 non-decent homes. Of course there are plans in place that are addressing this, such as retrofit and warm homes packages. But we still have too many people living in homes that don't meet their needs.

Housing Standards

Nothing to report

Beat Your Bills

The next ByB event will be on Thursday 29th October at Fairstead Community Centre from 1.30 until 5pm. Please let any residents that you know of who are struggling know about the session.

Community Transport

One of our officers has worked with some local transport providers to fine tune a report that he'd written about public transport and its links with better health outcomes. We have also asked the Institute of Health Equity if they would be interested in using it nationally as a template to unlocking more place funding to support better public transport. The report, titled West Norfolk Bus Service Investment explores the links between transport and health inequalities through a Marmot lens and finds that limited public transport provision can contribute towards poorer access to healthcare, reduced employment

opportunities, social isolation and wider inequalities. This is particularly the case for older people, young people, low income households and those without access to a car. The current funding system that our transport providers operate within is really challenging as we don't receive funding that recognises our rurality. The paper makes a strong case for changing the system and will be used as evidence for exploration of other options. I attended a regular West Norfolk Community Transport meeting where we heard of the work ongoing to manage finances during a time when fuel costs are high and maintenance costs ongoing. It was good to learn that passenger numbers are up and that the DfT have provided bus funding to support the increased fuel costs.

Assets of Community Value and Bus Shelters

Bus shelters are now being replaced on Fairstead estate, along Gayton and Gaywood road and Wootton Road. I took a look at one on Winston Churchill Drive and could see how much better the new ones are and how much the community value having them. Decent bus shelters encourage use of public transport.

Healthier Lives strategy

I attended the opening of the Accommodation with Care building in Hunstanton and had a tour around the facility - Lavender View. It really is a beautiful place and will enable older people to live healthier and longer lives independently while being able to access the care that they need.

Youth

I met with the Youth Advisory Board team and heard about the introduction of an open access youth group moving into Gaywood Community Centre for young people ages 11-16. There'll be a range of activities on offer as well as a space for them to just chill. It's a 14-month programme with the current group having run since April. This will support a different cohort of young people than those who usually attend YAB meetings.

Safeguarding

I attended one of the regular Health and Wellbeing Board meetings at NCC (where I was appointed Vice Chair of the board). We had reports from both Adults and Children's Services on their safeguarding processes and whether adequate safeguarding has been achieved. I raised several concerns about the children's report, one of which was the failure to fully refer to the needs of looked after children. I was given reassurance that safeguarding for looked after children was extensively covered in a separate report.

I attended an online event which focussed on Adult Social Care hosted by Local Government East and it was revealed that safeguarding adults didn't come out well and there was a need to promote wellbeing and prevent abuse and neglect. We heard that safeguarding should always come first and that nothing should take precedent over the safety of people.

Customer relations and CIC

The CIC have taken 43,993 calls to date this year and the average answer time was 3 minutes 17 seconds. When compared to some of our

neighbouring authorities this is outstanding. One, which I won't name took 10 minutes! The team undertake mystery shoppers work, where they call another authority to see how long they must wait (it's a nationwide programme) some of our staff doing this test have waited 58 minutes and another 71 minutes. We know that 51% of calls that our abandoned to our team are over 9 minutes, so we can ascertain that residents are willing to wait a certain amount of time, then they give up. Chats are answered within 20 seconds, and our customer satisfaction rate remains at around 80%. The team continue to deliver satisfaction to our residents when they call and I thanked them for the work they do and the way in which they deliver it.

Health and Wellbeing

As said previously, I have been appointed as the vice chair of the health and wellbeing board at Norfolk County and I'm keen to bring about closer scrutiny of the decisions being made. We currently merely rubber stamp presentations and reports, but due to changes in legislation and integration of health and care, wellbeing boards have a growing responsibility. The importance of the Health Overview and Scrutiny committees in scrutinizing decision is first and foremost, they have the ability to refer decision made by health trusts to the secretary of state for health. But the H&WB Boards have responsibility for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy which should inform the development of the joint commissioning arrangement (Sect 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006) in the place and the coordination of the NHS and Local Authorities commissioning including the Better Care Fund plan and Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment. So a lot to place on the shoulders of elected members, some of whom have no experience, so when one of these documents lands on the desk, might not be clear what needs to be included. As we are a statutory forum for real strategic oversight it's important that those who attend the board know what they're faced with. As such I have started attending a Communities of Practice group which I hope will help educate me. Our Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board have drafted a strategy to support men's health even though there is no legal requirement to have one. This is showing how Norfolk is leading the way. The data obscures men's health inequalities and there was a focus on behaviours and attitudes that were barriers to men accessing the healthcare that they needed, whether physical or mental. Men are still told to "man up" toxic masculinity impacts negatively on men and women and we need to work to overcome it; The strategy will include a "father pathway" and support father inclusive practice. Success will be defined by behaviour change which will normalise health help seeking behaviours.

I met with officers commissioned by the ICB who are tasked with looking at how they can keep people who suffer from ill health, in the workplace. It sounded similar to me to the Connect to Work group, but I was told that while there was overlap, they did different things. I'll wait and see before I pronounce a judgement. Connect to work are meant to be mainly for people who are already off work sick or 15% who're in employment. Whereas this group will work with all groups who promote work organisations to the employers. They'll bring together an "eco system" of work, health and skills to

support and navigate through a system to find what skills they have that can be used elsewhere. The group contributed towards the Get Norfolk Working Strategy. I fully support anything that can help people enter the world of work, move them to a better workplace for their health or help them retrain for different employment because we know that good jobs with good pay and job security improve health outcomes. Employment is one of the wider determinants of health. But I do have concerns when different but similar group are set up that could duplicate work and dilute the impact. I went to the Institute of Health Equity annual conference and gained valuable insight into what other areas are offering to help reduce health inequalities and felt pride that our borough, while small and facing challenges around our geographical spread, are delivering so many services and working closely with partner agencies to improve the health of the people we represent. There was a focus around employment as health creates wealth and wealth creates health. Money helps us to have the headspace to make better choices while industry pushes us towards bad choices – like smoking, alcohol, fast food. Good work provides income, security and the control needed for a healthy standard of living. Healthy work is a national growth opportunity, but we've never had a workplace health system. As you can imagine, the Marmot principles around employment and good work and a healthy standard of living were a frequent topic.

I attended a mental health summit in Norwich with a focus around the mental health of young people. Last year I made a commitment to talk about men's mental health, which I've made good on. This year I committed to listen to the voice of young people when talking about their mental health. The following day I met with MIND who are offering a skills for life course for young people aged between 14 and 25. The purpose is to promote positive mental health and emotional wellbeing, build confidence and self-esteem, strengthen resilience and coping strategies, develop practical life and employability skills and to support young people to feel more hopeful, prepared and connected. The programme looks to support those who may experience stress, anxiety or low confidence, who are navigating transitions (for example, exams, leaving education or entering work) who face social, academic or family pressures and who are less likely to engage with traditional mental health services. So, if you have a group near you that might find this programme helpful, please contact Stewart Oddie at MIND on stewart.oddie@norfolkandwaveneymind.org.uk. He'd be happy to hear from you

We held our regular health and wellbeing partnership meeting where we received a presentation from Lorna from Connect to Work. CtW is delivered by Working Well Norfolk.

Cabinet Member's Report to Council

29 October 2026

Councillor Josie Ratcliffe – Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy and Car Parking

Report to Council for the period 14 September to 20 October 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

My current focus is on the Transport and Parking Strategies for King's Lynn, which sit within the framework of the King's Lynn Masterplan. The Masterplan is a vision for King's Lynn town centre which puts residents, businesses, visitors and the town's unique culture and heritage at its heart.

Transport Policies and Joint Implementation

The updated King's Lynn Transport Strategy has been adopted by the Borough Council. It sets out how transport in and around King's Lynn could improve over the coming years, looking at how people travel today and what changes are needed to support the town as it grows. It focuses on supporting new homes and jobs, improving access to shops and services, and encouraging healthier and more sustainable ways to travel.

Looking ahead to 2035, the Strategy identifies a range of possible transport improvements, including:

- Better walking and cycling routes
- Improved public transport connections
- Upgrades to key roads and junctions
- Transport support for new housing and employment areas
- Improvements to the town centre and historic areas

The Strategy also includes an Implementation Plan which sets out potential projects that could be delivered when funding becomes available.

www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20241/strategies_and_plans

Bus service to Downham Market railway station

A new bus service is now operating from Swaffham to Downham Market railway station. It's timed to connect with southbound trains and runs Monday to Saturday. Central Connect run the service and the timetable can be found at:

www.central-connect.co.uk/services/KCTB/67

Car Parking

King's Lynn Car Parking Strategy is being developed in relation to emerging land use, economic development and regeneration, and transport and climate change policies and plans. It will help ensure that the needs of existing and future businesses and residents within the borough, as well as visitors and commuters to the town, will be met (including increasing the number of "accessible" spaces). King's Lynn has a large rural catchment, so the Strategy will aim to maintain car parking provision while making more efficient use of town centre land.

The Borough Council operates car parks in King's Lynn, Hunstanton, Heacham and Burnham Market. Parking charges and permits are under review, along with potential installation of barriers and technology to manage car parks more efficiently. For example, St James' multi-storey short-stay car park (PE30 1BT) is in a great location close to the town centre, but it is under-utilised and always has spaces. However, we are aware the lighting needs to be better so users feel safer; and this is a proposed improvement.

Portfolio Briefings

I would like to thank the officers who are briefing me on my other portfolio responsibilities:

- Cemeteries and Crematorium
- CCTV
- ICT
- Customer Complaints
- Data Protection, Freedom of Information and GDPR

As I get up to speed on these areas of council activities, I will expand my future reports to Council.

The 'Fen Line' Railway Line

I have been asked to provide regular updates on railway services in West Norfolk. Unfortunately, users of our railway line have suffered far too many delays and cancellations this year. Outside the council, I am on the committee of the Fen Line Users Association (FLUA), which is the primary organisation lobbying on behalf of rail travellers in West Norfolk, and they are in constant contact with operators in the rail industry about the catalogue of current issues.

FLUA works on maintaining and developing services between the Fen Line stations (King's Lynn, Watlington, Downham Market, Littleport, Ely, Waterbeach, and Cambridge North) and onwards to Cambridge and London. FLUA sends a detailed newsletter, "The Fenliner", to its members several times per year. The September 2026 edition includes these topics:

- Fen Line services in freefall
- New "Fen Line Action Plan" now offers hope?
- Overhead Line Equipment

- Problems with the Class 379s
- Keeping up the pressure for improvements
- Cambridge South
- GBR - Not just a paint job?
- When is a cycle space not a cycle space?
- New bus route serving Downham Market station!

Please ask me if you would like to receive a copy of The Fenliner. Councillors and officers can request to join the mailing list for future editions.

Representatives of the rail industry attend FLUA's AGM to give members the opportunity to raise issues with key staff from across the network (who will likely receive intense questioning this year). The 2026 AGM is 14th November at Waterbeach, at a venue within walking distance of the station. The AGM is open to current members, and to new members if they join FLUA beforehand or at the start of the AGM.

www.flua.org.uk

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

Joint Panel 11 November 2026

Borough Councillors have been invited to a Joint Panel Meeting on Wednesday 11th November to consider the King's Lynn Masterplan and Parking Strategy, prior to its consideration by Cabinet.

Cabinet Members Report to Council

29th October 2026

Councillor Ring – Cabinet Member for Business and Deputy Leader

Report to Council for the period to October 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

Heritage, Regeneration and the Future of King's Lynn

Introduction

For this month's report, I have chosen to focus on heritage and the considerable progress being made in protecting, restoring and bringing new life to some of the most important historic buildings in King's Lynn.

We are fortunate to live in a borough with an extraordinary architectural, maritime and cultural history. King's Lynn was once one of England's most important ports, and the wealth and influence of that period remain visible in its streets, buildings and waterfront.

However, heritage cannot simply be about preserving the past. Our historic buildings must have a purpose and a sustainable future. They should contribute to the prosperity of our town, attract visitors, support local businesses, create employment and provide facilities that our communities can enjoy.

Over the past six months, we have seen significant progress on several major projects, secured substantial external funding and continued to develop a joined-up approach to heritage and regeneration. The scale of work now taking place demonstrates that we are moving beyond plans and aspirations to delivery.

1. St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub

The restoration and regeneration of St George's Guildhall continues to be one of the most significant heritage and cultural investments in King's Lynn for generations.

The Guildhall is recognised as the oldest working theatre in the country, with its extraordinary medieval structure and associations with William Shakespeare. It is a building of national and international significance.

Construction commenced in November 2025, with the project programmed towards reopening in late summer 2028. Work has included the protection and conservation of historic structures, roof works, structural alterations and archaeological investigation.

Our ambition is considerably greater than simply restoring a historic theatre. We are creating a cultural destination that will combine live performance, heritage interpretation, exhibitions, education, creative industries, hospitality and community use.

Importantly, we now have measurable targets demonstrating the economic and social benefits this investment is expected to deliver. The project's projected outcomes include:

- £30.8 million in economic benefit.
- Approximately 70,000 annual visitors and users.
- 117 jobs supported or created.
- 200 theatre performances each year.
- 175 additional events annually.
- 50 to 60 entrepreneurs and creative start-ups supported.

The wider programme of physical regeneration and social value targets also identifies:

- 34 permanent full-time equivalent jobs and 55 temporary full-time jobs supported during delivery.
- 10 heritage buildings renovated or restored and six derelict buildings brought back into use.
- Eight improved cultural facilities and enhanced education and training facilities.
- 50 enterprises supported.
- 825 square metres of new office accommodation, providing 11 to 14 creative business spaces.
- 1,572 square metres of parks, green spaces and outdoor areas improved.

These are projected outputs and targets, rather than benefits already realised, and they provide a basis for measuring the project's future success. The 34 permanent full-time equivalent posts and 117 jobs supported or created are different measures and should not be added together.

The Guildhall will offer multiple reasons for people to visit King's Lynn, return regularly and stay longer. That matters because visitors to cultural attractions also support our cafés, restaurants, shops, accommodation providers and other town centre businesses.

The scheme places considerable emphasis on accessibility and social inclusion. Step-free access, improved facilities, inclusive learning opportunities and provision for community organisations will help ensure that the benefits reach well beyond traditional theatre audiences.

The proposed King Street public realm improvements, including safer pedestrian arrangements, seating, cycle parking and additional planting, will also help improve the setting and accessibility of this important building.

Heritage is sometimes portrayed as something we preserve for sentimental reasons, but the Guildhall demonstrates just how misplaced that thinking can be. A project with a projected £30.8 million economic benefit, supporting employment, attracting visitors and creating opportunities for young people, community organisations and businesses, is an investment in our future.

The ultimate measure of success will not simply be the number of buildings restored, but the number of people who use them, the jobs and opportunities created, and the lasting contribution they make to the prosperity and wellbeing of West Norfolk.

2. King's Lynn Custom House

The Custom House is arguably the most recognisable building in King's Lynn and one of the finest examples of classical architecture in England. It has stood at the

heart of our historic waterfront for more than 300 years, symbolising the town's maritime wealth and commercial importance.

I was delighted that, following years of planning, funding negotiations and detailed conservation work, we were able to announce the appointment of Norfolk-based contractor King & Company to undertake its restoration.

The project is deliberately sensitive to the historic significance of this Grade I listed building. The works include conservation and repair of the stonework, windows, roof and distinctive cupola, with almost all historic fabric being retained.

Crucially, the project is also about making the building accessible, usable and sustainable for the future. Improvements include an accessible toilet, a platform lift to allow visitors to reach the magnificent first-floor Long Room, improved facilities and a kitchenette serving the upper floors, allowing previously unused office accommodation to be brought back into use.

The intention is that the Custom House will once again become an active and welcoming part of King's Lynn rather than simply a beautiful building to admire from outside.

Complementary improvements are planned for Purfleet Quay in spring 2027, including upgraded lighting and electrical infrastructure to support events and greater public use of the waterfront.

Together with the Guildhall investment, the Custom House forms an important part of our ambition to create a connected cultural and heritage destination running through King Street and along the riverfront. I am particularly pleased that we are now progressing from years of discussion about the future of this iconic building to delivering the conservation programme necessary to secure that future.

3. Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse

One of the most encouraging developments of recent weeks has been the successful award of £902,227 from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Capital Fund towards the conservation of the Grade II listed Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse on South Quay.

Cabinet has agreed £250,000 of match funding, creating a programme of approximately £1.15 million for essential repairs, conservation and enabling works, subject to Listed Building Consent. This represents a significant vote of confidence from Historic England in our ambitions for King's Lynn and its historic riverfront.

The warehouse is a rare surviving example of the town's historic commercial and industrial activity, dating from the eighteenth century and associated with the grain trade and King's Lynn's role as a major port.

It is a building that has faced considerable challenges, and without intervention its long-term future would remain uncertain. The funding will allow us to address important conservation issues and undertake the work necessary to make future sustainable use possible.

It is important to recognise that this investment is not the completion of the warehouse's regeneration. Rather, it is an essential step towards securing the building and enabling a viable long-term future.

During Heritage Open Day in September, 762 visits were recorded to the warehouse, demonstrating the considerable public interest in this remarkable building and its history.

Our ambition is to see the warehouse brought back into meaningful use, contributing to the character, activity and economic potential of South Quay. The

award is also a testament to the work undertaken by council officers and our partnership with Historic England.

4. South Quay Dryside Facilities and the Historic Waterfront

The development of new dryside facilities on South Quay is another example of heritage-led regeneration being about practical improvements as well as the restoration of buildings.

The new facilities are designed to improve the experience of people visiting King's Lynn by water, including showers, toilets, laundry provision, visitor information and water refill facilities. These are important additions to the town's leisure boating infrastructure and support our wider ambitions to encourage greater use of the River Great Ouse and promote King's Lynn as a destination for visiting craft.

The facilities also support the Sail the Wash initiative and the wider potential of our waterways as a tourism asset. During September's Heritage Open Day, 179 visits were recorded to the new facilities, providing an early indication of public interest. King's Lynn owes much of its historic importance to the river, yet for many years we have arguably failed to make the most of that relationship.

The dryside facilities, Custom House and Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse projects should not be viewed in isolation. Together they are helping to reconnect the town with its waterfront and create a more attractive, accessible and active riverside. Our objective must be to encourage visitors to arrive, explore the town and spend time and money with our local businesses.

5. King's Lynn Heritage Open Day 2026

One of the most positive demonstrations of public enthusiasm for our heritage came on Sunday 13 September, when King's Lynn Civic Society organised another hugely successful Heritage Open Day.

The national theme this year was Everyday Histories, with activities celebrating not only our buildings but also the lives of the people who lived and worked in them.

Despite a damp start, the event attracted impressive numbers of residents and visitors, many of whom took the opportunity to explore buildings and places normally closed to the public.

The attendance figures recorded by participating venues are particularly encouraging:

Heritage venue	Recorded visits
Town Hall and Guildhall	1,876
Stories of Lynn	1,529
King's Lynn Minster	1,495
St George's Guildhall	1,059
Valiant Sailor	1,041
Hanse House	873
True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum	852
Red Mount Chapel	828
Woolmarket House	773
Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse	762
St Nicholas Chapel	713
South Gate	539

These figures represent recorded visits at individual sites rather than unique visitors, and not every venue was able to record attendance. Nevertheless, they

demonstrate both the remarkable breadth of our heritage attractions and the considerable appetite for opportunities to explore them.

The event included guided walks, historic exhibitions, music, performances, re-enactments, talks, the popular vintage bus service and a market showcasing Norfolk producers.

The Borough Council was pleased to be the principal sponsor, to open buildings including the Town Hall, South Gates and Red Mount Chapel, and to provide staff support and facilities.

I want particularly to congratulate King's Lynn Civic Society. This major annual event is organised by a small team of volunteers, supported by many other volunteers, organisations, businesses and property owners. Their commitment is extraordinary, and they deserve our sincere thanks.

Heritage Open Day demonstrates something that is sometimes overlooked. The value of heritage is not limited to its architecture. It brings communities together, encourages volunteering, supports businesses, attracts visitors and helps people develop a stronger connection with the place in which they live.

Next year's event is scheduled for Sunday 12 September 2027, and I hope we can continue to support its success.

6. True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum

Another welcome development has been the Borough Council's £6,000 grant supporting further work at True's Yard Fisherfolk Museum.

True's Yard plays a vital role in preserving and explaining the history of North End and the generations of fishing families who helped shape King's Lynn. The grant is supporting the next phase of work following the discovery of important remains associated with the town's historic fishing community.

Projects such as this are important because they preserve the history of ordinary working people as well as the grander buildings associated with the town's wealth and commercial importance. Our heritage is not simply the history of merchants and wealthy families. It is also the history of fishermen, dock workers, tradespeople and the communities that built our town.

True's Yard is an outstanding example of how those stories can be preserved and shared with future generations.

7. The Carnegie Building and The Workshop

The regeneration of the former Carnegie Library building represents another important investment in King's Lynn's architectural and community heritage.

This historic building is being given a new future following the relocation of library services to the new town centre library. The programme of work is intended to conserve and improve the building while enabling The Workshop to develop its activities in a more accessible and inclusive environment.

Importantly, the former Workshop premises remain in existence, and the opportunity to relocate to the Carnegie building arose because the old library became available.

This is a welcome example of an important heritage asset being adapted for continued community use. The objective is not merely to save an old building. It is to create a place where people can learn, participate, develop skills and enjoy creative and inclusive activities.

8. Wider Heritage, Culture and Partnership Working

Alongside these major capital projects, we continue to work with organisations responsible for protecting, promoting and making use of West Norfolk's heritage. These include Historic England, King's Lynn Civic Society, King's Lynn Preservation Trust, Norfolk Museums Service, King's Lynn Town Guides and the many community organisations and volunteers who maintain and interpret historic places throughout the borough.

We have also continued to strengthen relationships within the cultural sector, including through Create King's Lynn and our work with Creative Arts East.

These partnerships are essential. Historic buildings require specialist knowledge, careful conservation and sustainable management. Equally, their future success depends on creative programming, community participation and an ability to attract new audiences.

The council cannot and should not attempt to do everything itself. Our role includes bringing partners together, helping unlock funding, supporting community organisations and providing the leadership necessary to ensure that individual projects contribute to wider ambitions.

9. Heritage and the King's Lynn Masterplan

The projects outlined in this report are important individually, but their real significance becomes clearer when considered as part of the wider King's Lynn Masterplan.

The future of our town centre cannot depend upon recreating the retail environment of twenty or thirty years ago. Shopping habits have changed, online retail has become firmly established, and town centres increasingly need to provide a broader range of reasons for people to visit, spend time and choose to live there.

Our long-term ambition is therefore for King's Lynn to develop as a mixed-use town centre, combining homes, shops, hospitality, leisure, culture, education and employment. Heritage is central to that vision.

St George's Guildhall will create a major cultural attraction. The Custom House will bring new activity to our waterfront. Sommerfeld and Thomas offers the prospect of another important historic building returning to use. Improved visitor facilities will strengthen our river-based tourism offer.

These investments will complement our ambitions for the Southgates area, public realm improvements and the wider regeneration opportunities identified through the Masterplan.

Public investment can help address some of the more difficult conservation challenges, create momentum and encourage businesses and property owners to invest in surrounding areas. Our approach must be to use heritage as an asset for economic growth rather than regarding historic buildings as obstacles to development.

The town's distinctive character is something that competing destinations cannot easily replicate. Making the most of those assets is fundamental to building a stronger and more successful town.

10. External Funding and Value for Money

Our responsibility is not simply to secure money for historic buildings, but to show what each pound of public investment achieves. This means being clear about the council's contribution, the external funding it unlocks, the future costs of operating each asset and the tangible benefits for residents and businesses.

The Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse is a useful illustration. Historic England's award of £902,227 is being supported by £250,000 of council match funding. On those stated figures, every £1 of council match funding is accompanied by approximately £3.61 of external grant, helping assemble a conservation programme of approximately £1.15 million. Put another way, around 78% of this stated funding package comes from Historic England and around 22% from the council. Those proportions describe the identified funding package, not a calculation of the scheme's ultimate financial return.

The value for money lies partly in using a relatively smaller local contribution to tackle essential repairs to a nationally important building before further deterioration increases the scale and cost of intervention. It also lies in making future sustainable use possible. But this initial conservation work should not be confused with a completed regeneration scheme: the next stages must still demonstrate a credible long-term use and affordable maintenance arrangements.

The Guildhall gives us another, broader test. Its projected £30.8 million economic benefit, approximately 70,000 annual visitors and users, and 117 jobs supported or created are substantial ambitions. They are not, however, cash receipts to the council, nor are they proof of a financial return on the capital investment. The economic benefit is a forecast that must be tested against delivery, and should not be presented as a saving to the council's revenue budget.

For the Guildhall and our other major schemes, value for money needs to be demonstrated through four connected measures:

- Funding leverage: how much external investment we secure for the local funding committed.
- Financial sustainability: realistic operating costs, maintenance liabilities, income opportunities and future demands on council resources.
- Economic return: actual jobs, local contracts, business activity, visitor numbers and spending generated beyond the project itself.
- Community return: access, educational participation, cultural activity, volunteering and the extent to which residents from across West Norfolk benefit.

This also means considering what would happen if we did nothing. Leaving historic buildings vacant or deteriorating is not a cost-free option: it can lead to escalating repairs, lost income opportunities, continued risk to important assets and missed regeneration benefits. Equally, the existence of a grant does not by itself make a project good value; the full costs and long-term commitments must still be scrutinised.

As each project progresses, I want clear and proportionate reporting against approved budgets, grant conditions, delivery milestones and the agreed social and economic outputs. Where targets change, we should explain why. Where an investment creates an ongoing operating cost, we should identify how that cost will be met. Where economic impact is claimed, we should distinguish forecasts from results.

At a time of pressure on public finances, and as we prepare for Local Government Reorganisation, this discipline is essential. Our aim should be to leave the successor authority with better-used historic buildings, clearer asset responsibilities, sustainable operating plans and measurable benefits rather than simply a portfolio of completed capital works.

That is the strongest value-for-money case for heritage-led regeneration: leveraging national funding, preventing avoidable deterioration and turning important buildings into active, useful assets, while being transparent about what has been spent and what has actually been delivered.

Conclusion

The past six months have demonstrated real progress in our approach to heritage and regeneration.

We have continued work on the internationally significant St George's Guildhall, advanced the restoration of our iconic Custom House, secured more than £900,000 of national investment for Sommerfeld and Thomas Warehouse, improved facilities on our historic waterfront and supported the work of organisations that preserve and celebrate our local history.

We have also seen, through Heritage Open Day, the extraordinary public enthusiasm for the history and character of King's Lynn.

I would like to thank our officers, external partners, community groups, funding organisations, contractors and volunteers for their commitment and contribution.

There is much still to do, and major conservation projects inevitably bring challenges, but the direction of travel is encouraging.

We should be proud of our heritage, but pride alone is not enough. We have a responsibility to ensure these extraordinary buildings survive, remain relevant and continue to benefit future generations.

Our heritage is not simply a reminder of what King's Lynn once was. It is one of the greatest assets we have in determining what King's Lynn can become.

The challenge, and the opportunity, is to use that heritage to create a town where people want to live, businesses want to invest and visitors want to return. That is what this programme of work is intended to achieve.

Cabinet Members Report to Council

Date of Council Meeting 29th October 2026

Councillor Alistair Beales – Leader of the Council

Report to Council for the period 24 th September 2026 to 29 th October 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution

I provided members with an update on Local Government Reorganisation ahead of the Council meeting on 24 September. The Government's review of the programme continues to create uncertainty over the next stages and timetable. I will continue to keep members informed as further information becomes available and to ensure that West Norfolk's interests remain clearly represented. The briefing material was subsequently circulated to members.

Queen Elizabeth Hospital

Council's consideration of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on 24 September was followed by an all-member briefing on 8 October. Arrangements have also been made for a joint panel meeting on 21 October, providing a further opportunity for members to consider the hospital's developing clinical strategy and the implications for West Norfolk. The Council is committed to supporting the case for high-quality, accessible hospital services for West Norfolk while ensuring that the views and concerns of our communities are heard as the future configuration of services is considered.

King's Lynn Neighbourhood Board

The King's Lynn Neighbourhood Board met on 25 September. The meeting considered the emerging King's Lynn Masterplan, progress on the St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub, community-led governance, the Pride in Place programme, Riverfront works and wider Town Deal projects.

The Guildhall

Construction work at St George's Guildhall continues. The September update reported expenditure of £5.6 million against the £30.5 million project target, with £15.1 million of funding secured and a remaining funding requirement of £15.4 million. Work also continues on operational planning, fundraising, community engagement and the future relationship between the Council and the Guildhall charity.

Housing development programme

I chaired the Housing Developments Steering Group on 14 October. The group reviewed progress at Styleman Court, Valentine Park, Florence Fields and other housing sites, including sales performance, affordable housing delivery, legal transfers and potential changes to the tenure mix.

Nine additional affordable homes are progressing towards management by Broadland, with the necessary legal transfers and leases being advanced. The group also considered the potential for additional affordable, private-rented and key-worker housing, while recognising the importance of maintaining balanced and sustainable communities.

The financial position at Florence Fields and Parkway remains a significant area of focus. Higher construction-cost inflation, weaker sales income and the costs associated with holding completed properties have affected the forecast. Further work is therefore being undertaken on sales incentives, affordable-housing opportunities and alternative tenure options.

Florence Fields

Members were invited to visit Florence Fields on 2 October, and the opening of the road named in memory of the late John Collop, a long serving councillor of this Borough, was marked on 7 October. The site visit provided an opportunity to view progress on the site and recognise the work undertaken by the Council and its development partners. Members were asked for feedback after the visit and future visits will be informed by that constructive and helpful feedback.

Community Project Fund

I participated in the Community Project Fund assessment meeting on 16 October. Applications were considered against the published scheme requirements as part of the process for supporting locally led projects across the borough. Cabinet is the final decision maker and will consider recommendations at its next meeting.

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)

Given the number and scope of NSIPs in West Norfolk the Borough Council employs a dedicated planner to deal with these applications. Work continues in relation to the Drovers Solar Farm examination, the Eastern Green Link 3 and 4 proposals, Grimsby to Walpole, the Fens Reservoir and the emerging Redmere Wind Farm proposal. The Eastern Green Link proposals would include underground cabling, two converter stations and a new National Grid substation in the Walpole area.

A recent addition to the list of NSIP's is the enormous application from Longmarsh Geen Energy Solar for a solar farm, battery storage and data centre on 3,700 acres on two sites and potentially impacting on a number of villages including Fincham, Barton Bendish, Tilney St Lawrence and others.

Cllr. Moriarty is the lead member for these matters and can explain the process in more detail and I will discuss briefings with him to ensure members are familiar with that process. In the meantime. Council officers continue to engage with promoters and applicants, challenge aspects of the work where appropriate and seek effective engagement with parish councils and affected communities.

External and community engagement

During the period, I met Terry Jermy MP and attended meetings relating to the Norfolk Business Board, the Adapted Sports Hub, Fisher Fleet and quay structures, housing delivery, the Nar Ouse site, parish matters and major projects. I also attended the first anniversary event of the Norfolk Citizens Advice Patrons' Club and the Royal Norfolk Agricultural Association senior leaders' briefing.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

Between the date of preparing this report and Full Council, scheduled activities include:

- The Guildhall Programme Steering Group, focusing on delivery of the St George's Guildhall and Creative Hub project.
- A pre-meeting for the November Member Major Projects Board.
- A community consultation meeting concerning Aldi's proposals in King's Lynn.
- A further review of housing data relating to Styleman Court.
- The joint panel meeting on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.
- The October King's Lynn Neighbourhood Board meeting, preceded by a visit to the completed Riverfront dry-side facilities.
- An update from Broadland Housing on the proposed Wild Ken Hill development.
- A further major housing data review and a meeting of the ICT Development Group on 28 October.
- A pre-Council briefing on the national planning scheme of delegation, Full Council and the Extraordinary Council meeting to confer the title of Honorary Alderman on 29 October.