

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

29th August 2024

COUNCILLOR – JO RUST CABINET MEMBER FOR – PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES

For the period June 27th - 12th August 2024

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters. –

Housing register

1527 live applications

1 Emergency
198 High
504 Medium
824 Low

210 new or change in circumstances forms received - the forms were unable for a week to allow for essential maintenance by our IT provider

Housing Options

133 applicants given housing advice, 80 new homeless declarations and/or are ongoing investigations.

Lets advised - 38

On June 13th I took part in a legal walk to raise funds for the Access to Justice Foundation who provide legal advice to the people and communities who need it most. Access to legal justice is harder to come by for these with limited financial means. Access to justice work to overcome this barrier. I took part in two days of Systems Leadership Training on 14th and 17th June. The training was put on by Sport England and we learnt more about how poverty and inactivity go hand in hand. We know that the significant health inequalities we experience in our communities lead to a lower life expectancy. We learnt about how looking at the whole system, rather than just pieces of it, could bring changes that see physical activity and healthy living as the default position, rather than individuals having to make a special effort. It sounds so easy, but we know if it were that simple, we would all be healthy and active. But the changes that we're making locally, whether it's becoming a Marmot Town, working with Sports England or the Clear, Hold, Build initiative, have provided us with the perfect opportunity to make some real differences. Alongside this is a strong need to help our local population to stop smoking. The cost of smoking health system in Norfolk is estimated to be £29 million a

year, but as a whole it costs Norfolk £872 million. This is also linked to health inequality as there is a trend which shows smoking rates vary by socioeconomic class. While we might not be able to stop 100% of people from smoking, in King's Lynn and West Norfolk we want to try to lower the rate from 21,300 to 14,900 – this is less than 55, which is the target. Here is a link to the report on smoking - [Director of Public Health Annual Report 2023 \(norfolkinsight.org.uk\)](#)

And here is a link to a way that we can all help to make this happen - [NCSCT e-learning](#)

I was pleased to attend the celebration to mark 50 years of sharing at St Faith's Church on Sunday 16th June. St Faith's is a shared church and the church hall with several faiths working together for the betterment of their parishioners.

On 17th June I judged a local art competition put on by Mencap which focused on what it meant to be healthy. It's so hard to judge competitions like this as all the entrants had worked really hard on their art. But there can only be one winner!

I was proud to be able to attend the MJ Awards in London on June 21st as the Purfleet Pantry had got through to the final of Transforming Lives Award in public services. This wonderful service, which has only been running for one year, was awarded a highly commended place. This is a testament to the hard work and dedication of Karen and her team. Well done to all.

Some of the team who conducted the Peer Review returned to speak to us. I've found the whole process very useful and informative. We were told that we were the most changed authority that they have known in a peer reviewed authority.

On 26th June we all had the chance to hear from Freebridge about their 30 year business plan and the £30 million they were putting in for tenant improvements and the plans to build 100 homes a year. The organisation is also looking at which properties work for them, and which don't. The plan is to dispose of those properties which don't work for them. There is a focus on working to turn around the void properties which will all know are an issue for our communities.

There have been several Health and Wellbeing meetings which I have chaired and at the most recent one we awarded Creative Arts East funding from the Better Care Fund as well as a collaborative piece of work with the QEH and CAB which will work on a social support formulary. Both projects will help our local residents, albeit in different ways. The Health and Wellbeing Partnership meetings bring a number of organisations together and we hear about the work that is being undertaken and how the organisations can work better together so avoid silo working.

On Friday 28th June I attended an Integrated Care System District Councils meeting where we were presented with the strategy to deal with Health

Inequalities. Health Inequalities are the unfair and avoidable differences in health across the population and between different groups within society. They arise because of the conditions in which we are born, grow, live work and age. They influence our opportunities for good health and how we think, feel act and this shapes our mental health, physical and social being. The work that we do in the health and wellbeing partnerships will have a significant role to play in the living and working conditions and lifestyle workstreams and we absolutely can't work in silos. We also had a presentation on smoking and as I set out earlier in this report, there is work that we can do around this. Helping our residents to stop smoking will not only improve their health but make a huge positive difference to their health too. Our authority will be making the smoke free pledge.

I chaired an Employment and Skills event in The Place on July 3rd. It was really well attended and we heard from some of our partners who provide services across the borough. It was good to share the information between the different organisations, each who had received funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund. We heard how our area has lower productivity, wages, growth and attainment in our area and we want to turn the dial on this situation. There were speakers from the guildhall, Lynnsport, Boost, Tech Skills for Life and others.

I had a very useful and informative meeting about the importance of good bus links, learning that 38% of all elderly people use their bus pass as a way to overcome loneliness.

On Thursday 4th I stayed up all night watching the votes come in for the general election. I am so pleased to welcome Terry Jermy as the new Labour MP for South West Norfolk. While there is concern that the rebuilding of the QEH could be delayed due to a change in government, there had been no funding released to progress the rebuild. We have been assured that the RAAC hospitals are a priority and the hospital themselves are welcoming the review and remain confident.

I attended a railway station development meeting along with other cabinet members and councillors. The meeting was led by James Palmer and the Eastern Powerhouse. We discussed the potential for a new railway station for the town. There was a definite appetite for it.

I attended an LGA Sports and Physical Activity course in Warwick university. I found the programme useful, and it will help support the work that we are doing across the borough with Sports England and Marmot. We heard how important physical activity is to our health and wellbeing and that physical activity is almost a magic pill. Understanding why there is a low take-up of physical activity in our area will help us improve outcomes.

I attended a meeting of Carer's Voice on 27th July and we were presented with an All Age Carer's Strategy which informed us that carers have to tell their story 14 times and are often passed back and forth between agencies. The strategy looks to change this.

We had a very informative meeting with the Environment Agency about the situation with the shingle ridge at Heacham. It was very reassuring to hear that the situation is not getting worse despite the problems with human reactions to the ridge, with some actually removing sections of it in order to get a better view.

I attended a meeting of West Norfolk Community Transport (WNCT) and can see that passenger numbers are gradually increasing although they're yet to reach the pre covid levels. WNCT have received Bus Service Improvement Programme funds which have enabled them to provide further journeys

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments.

VJ Day Commemoration
Pride – 17th August
Freebridge meeting
Meeting with Terry Jermy MP
Ukrainian Independence Day
AWN tour

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

KLACC/KLAC/KLAC sifting
Portfolio Briefing – Housing
Portfolio briefings – Health and Wellbeing
Portfolio Briefings – CIC
Full Council
Health and wellbeing partnership meetings (monthly)
West Norfolk Community Transport
E&C
Freebridge briefing
Peer Review meetings
Joint Group Meetings
Cabinet/special cabinet/cabinet sifting/Cabinet Briefings
IDB meetings
Food for Thought
King's Lynn Community Football AGM
Homelessness and housing delivery briefing
Staff survey feedback
ICS at NCC
Southgates masterplan briefing
Guildhall Briefing
Greater Change – Jonathan Tann
Bus and public transport meeting
Employment and Skills event
Rural Services telephone line switchover
Minster service for Festival
Sports and Physical Activity training
Railway Station Development

SLA meeting
QEH AGM
Carers Voice
Shingle Ridge meeting - Heacham