

## **Cabinet Members Report to Council**

**26<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

### **COUNCILLOR SIMON RING – TOURISM, BUSINESS, LEISURE, PROPERTY AND HERITAGE**

**For the period 1<sup>ST</sup> April to 15<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

#### **1. Overview**

This report outlines key activities, developments and outcomes across the portfolio areas since the close of the last civic year to present. Particular highlights include the progress on the Guildhall and Custom House projects, the successful delivery of the Hanse Business Conference and Festival, and ongoing business engagement initiatives.

#### **2. Tourism Department Update**

##### **2.1 Hanse League and HANSA20 Programme**

- Hanse Business Conference (13 June 2025): Successfully hosted at Hanse House in partnership with Norfolk Chambers of Commerce. High-profile speakers included Alan Pain (Department for Business and Trade) and Claudia West (Arts Council England).
- King's Lynn Hanse Festival (14–15 June 2025): Delivered with strong public engagement. Highlights included the Hanseatic Flag Parade with local youth involvement.
- HANSA Projection Project: Artist collective selected to deliver an international digital projection in late autumn 2025.
- Public Engagement Activities: Lectures, trails and community events highlighting King's Lynn's maritime heritage.

##### **2.2 Hanse Network Representation**

- Tourism Department Manager elected as Hanse Commissioner for England (3-year term).
- Representation at the International Hanse Festival in Visby, Sweden, with participation in parades, presentations, and peer-group sessions.

#### **3. Business Development**

##### **3.1 Rural Business Support**

- West Norfolk Rural Business Grant Scheme launched; supported by New Anglia Growth Hub.
- Events held in Downham Market and Hunstanton with wide organisational support.

### 3.2 Officer Appointment

- Anne Marie Ketteringham appointed as Business Development Officer. Active in business outreach and promoting council-led initiatives.

### 3.3 Strategic Initiatives

- SLA agreed with New Anglia Growth Hub for ongoing support and event delivery (funded by UKSPF).
- Expansion of Business Newsletter in progress.
- Exploring formation of a Manufacturing Networking Group to support sector collaboration.
- Positive enquiries generated through new branding of King's Lynn Enterprise Park.

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## 4. Leisure Services

### 4.1 Attendance & Membership

- Overall attendances down 7% year-on-year; real terms drop approx. 4%.
- Shortfalls noted in swimming lessons, casual swimming, group fitness, and sports courses.
- Memberships down 2% with increased attrition; new local competition noted as a factor.
- Despite lower numbers, membership income is 5% higher than last year due to a stronger starting base and fee increases.

### 4.2 Sports Courses (May 2024 vs May 2025)

On Tue, 17 Jun 2025 at 6:57 pm, Simon Ring <[sjr1965@googlemail.com](mailto:sjr1965@googlemail.com)> wrote:

### 4.3 Holiday Programmes and Events

- Big Norfolk Holiday Fun Programme supported over 5,000 children, up 15% on last year.
- GEAR Race: Over 2,600 main race runners and 1,000 children in Mini-GEAR — first return to pre-COVID numbers.

### 4.4 Financial Position

- Currently on track with controlled spending. £80k ahead on costs; £78k behind on income = balanced.
- Summer initiatives expected to improve income trajectory.

#### 4.5 Capital Projects

- Leisure working group progressing designs for:
    - St James Pool relocation to Lynnsport
    - Oasis redevelopment
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### 5. Property Portfolio

#### 5.1 Strategic Review

- Interim AD Jason Birch conducting full review of property holdings.
- Identified £16m in potential asset sales with neutral revenue effect.

#### 5.2 Current Activities

- Annual portfolio valuation completed.
  - Compliance audit and asset challenge underway.
  - Active procurement for rent reviews and letting agents.
  - Rollesby Road industrial site sale in progress.
  - Recruitment of permanent estates surveyors ongoing.
  - Engagement with Norfolk LGR property leads and sport operators continues.
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### 6. Strategic Planning – King's Lynn Masterplan

- Masterplanning underway to prepare development sites for the 2026 devolved mayoral framework.
  - Pre-consultation meetings held with stakeholders and landowners.
  - Focus on readiness to meet anticipated capital funding constraints and deliverability expectations.
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### 7. Heritage Projects

#### 7.1 St George's Guildhall

- Final tender evaluations underway; two shortlisted bidders.
- Standstill period ongoing; special R&D meeting on 1 July.
- Cabinet report scheduled for 7 July; Council decision expected 17 July.
- Renovation to commence immediately post-approval.

## 7.2 Custom House

- Project scope revised in line with heritage advice.
- Architects instructed to redesign with reduced impact and greater access.
- Lift changes enable increased building capacity and new usage options.
- Subject to planning, works may begin by early 2026.

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## 8. Conclusion

This reporting period has been marked by major milestones across heritage, tourism, business development, and leisure services. Several strategic projects are nearing critical decision points, and preparatory work for long-term growth and devolution continues in earnest.

### **Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled**

I have had numerous meetings with officers and outside bodies

#### Officers

Kate Blakemore  
Michelle Drewery  
Duncan Hall  
Martin Chisholm  
Jemma Curtis  
Tim Fitzhigham  
Honor Howell  
James Grant  
James Arandale  
Alexa Baker  
Tommy Goode  
Lynne Fawkes  
Siobahn Cleeve  
Richard Allen

#### Outside bodies

Civic Society  
Hunstanton Action Group  
Town Deal Board  
BID  
The Garage  
Museum Services

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