

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

27th November 2025

COUNCILLOR SUE LINTERN - CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE AND EVENTS

For the period 20th September to 14th November

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters.

Guildhall Closure and Borough-Wide Arts Delivery

The closure of the historic Guildhall for major regeneration works has opened an unexpected but exciting chapter for cultural activity across King's Lynn and the wider Borough. Instead of pausing programming, the project team and partners transformed the town into a dynamic cultural campus for the Dragon Festival. Activities normally based at the Guildhall were reimaged and delivered across twelve alternative venues, including the Minster, Corn Exchange, Stories of Lynn, Lynn Museum, St Nicholas' Chapel, True's Yard, the Majestic, the Workshop, King's Lynn Town Guides, and libraries in Dersingham, Hunstanton, Downham Market and Gaywood.

This distributed approach has not only maintained the Guildhall's presence during its closure but significantly expanded its reach. Initial figures show that hundreds of children and families took part in creative, educational and heritage sessions, demonstrating the strength of local cultural partnerships. The dragon-themed activities delivered with the Library Service highlight this new, outward-facing model of engagement.

The Guildhall Project Team is now working with the BID and Visit King's Lynn to support the upcoming Christmas programme.

Number 29 King Street remains open Monday–Saturday (11am–3pm) for anyone wishing to learn more about the project, and live-streaming of the building works is expected to begin in the coming weeks.

Ultimately, the Guildhall regeneration is becoming more than a physical transformation—it is reshaping the borough's cultural offer and strengthening partnerships that will endure long after the works are complete.

HANSA20: Hanseatic Digital Projection Project

HANSA20 marks a bold step forward in the town's creative storytelling. Running from this month through to January 2026, the project sees three landmark buildings—the Custom House, the Minster, and Greyfriars Tower—transformed into illuminated canvases celebrating King's Lynn's maritime history and the twentieth anniversary of its re-entry into the Hanseatic League. What sets this project apart is the depth of community participation. Over the

course of the summer and early autumn, more than 180 residents took part in hands-on workshops, designing ships, sea creatures, maps and motifs that were then digitised and animated by the appointed artists. The resulting projections are not simply works shown to the community—they are works created with the community.

This co-authorship approach not only elevates the artistic impact but reinforces the identity of King's Lynn as a place where heritage is not preserved in isolation but continually reinterpreted by the people who live here. The projections bring together past and present, craftsmanship and digital innovation, creating a nocturnal gallery that animates the town centre throughout the darker months.

Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, HANSA20 also strengthens the town's profile as an outward-looking, culturally confident Hanseatic partner, while enhancing the evening economy and drawing visitors during traditionally quieter periods.

The **Norfolk Coast: Myths & Legends** tourism campaign represents an imaginative new direction in the Borough's tourism offer, designed to bolster year-round visitation and stimulate off-season coastal tourism. Conceived and produced entirely in-house, the project centres on a striking 44-page trails and experiences booklet, enriched by local artistic contributions and crafted in a distinctive blend of black-and-white photography, collage, illustration and contemporary design.

The booklet delves into the region's rich tapestry of folklore, maritime mysteries, crime stories, ghostly tales and uncanny coastal legends—tapping into the growing national and international appetite for “dark tourism” and heritage storytelling. At the public launch events, masterfully narrated by Culture Babylon and introduced by our senior Tourism Officer, audiences were left with the memorable reminder: *“Some of these events really happened, some things exist only in the realm of the imagination, you must decide what you are willing to believe.”* All three events sold out almost immediately, demonstrating the strong public appetite for this creative approach.

Designed as a hybrid print–digital publication, the booklet uses QR codes throughout to give readers access to extended stories, maps, audio-visual materials and additional interpretive content online. This model combines the longevity and tactile appeal of print with the depth and flexibility of digital media—particularly valuable for visitors who may encounter unreliable coastal signal.

Early feedback suggests the booklet has significant staying power as both a practical guide and an attractive keepsake, likely to encourage repeat visits and strengthen awareness of the area's cultural identity. If this positive reception continues during winter distribution at attractions, accommodation sites and key visitor locations, the Tourism Department will explore options for future editions, expanded coastal coverage, collaborative content

development, and potential advertising partnerships.

In essence, *Myths & Legends* is far more than a booklet — it provides a fresh cultural lens through which residents and visitors alike can experience the Norfolk coast, deepening connections to place and celebrating the lesser-known stories that make Norfolk unique.

A special thank you to Phillip for his outstanding work on both the HANSA20 project and the *Myths & Legends* campaign, whose dedication and expertise have been central to the success of these initiatives.

Events Programme

The summer events season concluded in Hunstanton with a highly successful Soap Box Derby, which showcased the creativity and ingenuity of local participants. Entrants designed and built imaginative racing contraptions, highlighting both engineering skill and playful innovation. The event drew enthusiastic spectators and fostered a strong sense of local pride. In keeping with the community-focused ethos of the event, the straw safety barriers used on the day were donated to local residents afterward, ensuring the resources continued to benefit the area.

As the Borough transitions into its winter programme, focus shifts to seasonal highlights that bring residents and visitors together in celebration.

The annual Fireworks Display once again drew an estimated 20,000 attendees, demonstrating the enduring popularity of this much-loved tradition. Families were treated to a vibrant evening of live music, funfair attractions, and a wide variety of food and drink stalls, culminating in a spectacular free firework display. The event continues to serve as a cornerstone of the Borough's community calendar, combining entertainment with accessibility and reinforcing a sense of local identity.

Preparations are now underway for the Christmas Lights Switch-On, which promises to bring festive cheer to the town centre.

A big thank you to the Events Team for their dedication and professionalism in ensuring all our events are delivered safely, smoothly, and to such a high standard. Their careful planning, coordination, and attention to detail underpin the success of every occasion and allow residents and visitors alike to enjoy memorable, safe, and inclusive experiences.

These events also have a significant economic and community impact, boosting local businesses, encouraging tourism, and fostering social cohesion by bringing people together from across the Borough.

Through both summer and winter programming, the Borough's events calendar continues to offer a balanced mix of creativity, heritage, and community engagement, ensuring cultural participation remains inclusive and accessible throughout the year.

Cultural Partnerships

I met with my counterpart at North Norfolk District Council to explore opportunities for joint working and cultural partnership development. Such collaboration will become increasingly important as we move towards LGR. I also attended the Norfolk and Suffolk Culture Board briefing, which highlighted the need for a national strategic position on culture. The Board acts as a collective regional voice and plays a key role in shaping cultural policy. As culture is not a statutory responsibility, there is concern about its position under future devolution arrangements. Continued commitment from the new Mayoral and Unitary Authorities is essential.

LGA Cultural Services Programme

I completed a two-day LGA programme featuring speakers from the Arts Council, the LGA, Birmingham Museum Service, and councillors from Wigan, Essex, and Wandsworth. Topics included:

- innovative programmes from other councils
- social value and community impact
- creative practices and partnerships
- funding approaches
- future developments in AI and virtual reality

This has generated several new ideas to explore with our teams.

Norfolk Records Committee

At the October meeting, the Norfolk Records Office (NRO) confirmed it has received its latest quality stamp and progressed to the next accreditation stage. Preparations are underway to move into additional accommodation in anticipation of increased records arriving through LGR.

The NRO continues to deliver workshops for schools, Heritage Open Days events, and contributions to the Norwich Science Festival. It has also supported a UEA MA module and runs a volunteer blogging programme. A “Follow the Fish” pop-up exhibition on the Herring Girls is currently on display. Additionally, the NRO has secured Heritage Lottery funding and appointed three project staff, who will present their work at the next committee meeting.

Norfolk Joint Museums Committee (NJMC)

The meeting included updates on:

- The successful reopening of Norwich Castle and benchmarking of admissions prices, which remain competitive.
- A “twilight ticket” option and free entry for:
 - Norfolk schoolchildren
 - those on means-tested benefits
 - home-schooled children

Marketing work is underway to strengthen the Museum Pass offer.

Security concerns were discussed following a high-profile theft in Paris. It was reassuring to hear of improvements to collection and building security, though staff vigilance remains essential. The service continues to balance accessibility with preservation.

Visitor numbers across museums remain strong, particularly for school visits. Social media engagement on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn is also healthy.

A new Youth Engagement Strategy will soon launch to strengthen outreach to vulnerable groups.

Arts Council support is extended to 2026/27 and expected to run through 2027/28. Norwich Castle continues to expand its commercial activity, including venue hire, retail, filming and events.

Parish Councils

I continue to support Parish Councils, including mediation between Clenchwarton PC and the football club. Discussions are ongoing but progress towards a fair solution continues.

King's Lynn Festival

I met with the Committee Chair and Artistic Director to review opportunities and challenges ahead of the 75th anniversary programme next year. Planning is well underway with a promising proposed line-up.

King's Lynn Young Players

Alongside Cultural Champion Cllr Ware, I met the Chair of the King's Lynn Young Players. This long-standing amateur dramatics group for young people has been running for 30 years, offering weekly workshops and one or two productions annually. There is currently a waiting list for membership, with participants travelling from across the area, including those with special needs.

Hanse Festival Committee

I am pleased to have been appointed Chair of the Hanse Festival Committee. Our November meeting focused on early planning for next year's festival, including dates, activity proposals and funding/sponsorship options.

Creative Arts East (CAE)

I had a productive meeting with Creative Arts East, which delivers cultural opportunities in rural areas, supported by Arts Council and BFI funding. CAE coordinates touring theatre, live performances, young promoter schemes in schools, and creative workshops for older residents.

This aligns closely with my ambition to expand cultural provision in rural communities, and I look forward to developing collaborative opportunities.

The portfolio has delivered borough-wide cultural and heritage programmes, promoting public engagement, tourism, and strong collaborative networks.

Christmas lights switch on (a day of activities, street entertainment, live music, lantern making and lots more)
Hunstanton – Star gazing on the green
West Norfolk tourism forum
Kings Lynn film festival
Kings Lynn festive market

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

21/9 – Hunstanton Soap Box Derby
23/9 – Cabinet meeting
24/9 – Cultural Champion meeting
29/9 – Planning training
30/9 – Member training
2/10 – Pre-Council briefing - Careline
2/10 – Full Council
3/10 - meeting with Clenchwarton PC + football club
6/10 – Planning Committee
8/10 – Guildhall project board update
8/10 – Cabinet sifting
13/10 – Parish & Town Council meeting with AB
14/10 – meeting with North Norfolk District Council counterpart
16/10 – Kings Lynn Festival meeting
16/10 – Norfolk & Suffolk culture board briefing
17/10 - Portfolio meeting – DH and JC
17/10 - Portfolio meeting – JB
20/10 – Hunstanton photo shoot
20/10 - Portfolio meeting – MC, DM and AW
20/10 – E&C
21-22/10 – LGA Cultural services programme
23/10 – Portfolio meeting – KB, MC, JC and Tech Educators
23/10 – R&D
24/10 – Norfolk Records Committee
24/10 – Norfolk Records tour
24/10 – Norfolk Joint Museums Committee
24/10 – Fear in the Fens
26/10 – Myths & Legends (Kings Lynn)
28/10 – Hunstanton Masterplan workshop
29/10 – Member briefing (safety)
29/10 – Cabinet briefing
30/10 - Portfolio meeting – PE & AW
30/10 – Electoral Arrangements Committee training
31/10 – Kings Lynn Young Players
3/11 – Planning Committee
4/11 – Electoral Arrangements Committee

5/11 – CIL training (teams)
7/11 – Fawkes in the Walks
8/11 – Dragon Festival
10/11 – Hanse Festival Committee
11/11 – Cabinet
12/11 – Guildhall project board
12/11 – Hunstanton Masterplan briefing
12/11 – Kings Lynn Players – Titanic opening night
13/11 - Portfolio meeting – MC & PE
13/11 – Creative Arts East
14/11 - Portfolio meeting – SR, DH & JC
14/11 - Myths & Legends official launch