

Cabinet Members Report to Council

26th March 2026

Councillor Sandra Squire – Cabinet Member for Environment & Coastal

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

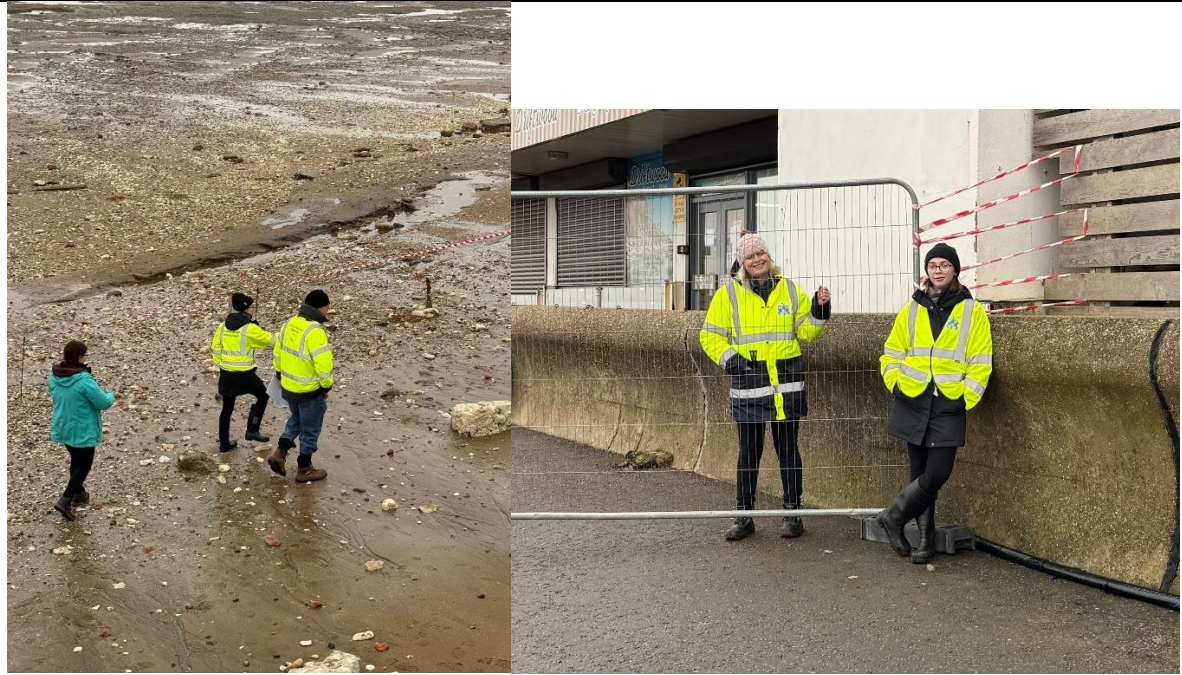
1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

Hunstanton Prom

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

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





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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Waste & Fly Tipping:

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

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

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

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

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

Warning letters:

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

The Mayors Business Awards

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

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

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

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

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

Fly Tipping Investigation and Enforcement:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Various Portfolio Briefings
Cabinet briefing

Cabinet

Joint Waste Contract review and development board

NEWS Board meeting

Hunstanton Coastal Defence briefing

Joint KLWNBC/Breckland Cabinet meeting

LGA Coastal SIG meetings

LGA Coastal SIG water quality discussion

Meeting with Chief Exec & Council Leader

Norfolk Coast Protected Landscape Forum

Several visits to the Prom

Mayors Business Awards

Visits to the Depot

Cabinet sifting

Hunstanton Sea Defence Student meeting

RFCC Member Learning session

North West Norfolk Catchment Partnership Meeting

Wash East Coast Management Strategy Stakeholder Forum

LGA Coastal SIG water quality working group