



REPORT TO CABINET

DATE OF MEETING	9 TH June 2026
REPORT TITLE	West Norfolk Economic Strategy – Action Plan 2026-2028
LEAD MEMBER	Cllr Simon Ring E-mail: cllr.Simon.Ring@West-Norfolk.gov.uk
LEAD OFFICER	Lead Officer: Jemma Curtis E-mail: jemma.curtis@west-norfolk.gov.uk
CONSULTEES	Internal departments including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development and Regeneration • Planning and Housing • Climate Change and Environment • Public Health and Community Services
WARDS AFFECTED	ALL WARDS

KEY DECISION	NO
DECISION MAKER	Cabinet
IS THE REPORT OPEN OR EXEMPT	OPEN

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	NO
HR IMPLICATIONS	NO
POLICY IMPLICATIONS	YES
STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS	NO
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	YES
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS	YES
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT COMPLETED	PRE-SCREEN HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The West Norfolk Economic Strategy (WNES) Action Plan 2026 -2028 sets out a focused programme of activity to deliver the priorities of the adopted West Norfolk Economic Strategy. The Action Plan translates the long-term economic vision approved by Cabinet in 2026, into a practical, time-bound set of interventions that can be delivered over the next two years, whilst laying the foundations for continued delivery beyond 2028 as part of Local Government Reorganisation.

The Action Plan is structured around the five strategic priorities from the WNES:

1. Thriving Towns
2. Access to Education & Good Work
3. Productive Jobs and Businesses
4. Managed Natural Resources

5. Healthy, Inclusive Communities

Together, these priorities respond to national policy changes, emerging local government reorganisation and devolved governance arrangements and local challenges and opportunities including productivity, skills, health inequalities town centre regeneration, climate resilience and inclusive economic growth.

The Action Plan is designed to be dynamic and will be reviewed annually. Importantly, the Action Plan also provides a shared framework for engagement with key public, private and third-sector stakeholders. It sets out a clear, place-based set of priorities and pipelines of activity that partners can align with when developing projects, seeking investment and bidding for external funding. By clearly articulating West Norfolk's economic priorities and delivery approach, the Action Plan supports coordinated partnership working and strengthens the Borough's collective ability to attract funding from government, devolved bodies and other external sources. It aligns closely with the Council's Corporate Strategy and Corporate Action Plan and supports delivery of wider place-based programmes including Pride in Place, devolution readiness, the Marmot programme and the Climate Change Strategy.

Importantly, the Action Plan delivers borough-wide benefits across both urban and rural communities. It recognises that West Norfolk's economy is highly dispersed, with a significant proportion of residents and businesses located in rural and coastal areas. Through improved transport connectivity, digital infrastructure, access to skills and training, and investment in local services and visitor economy assets, the Action Plan supports rural residents and businesses to access employment, education and leisure opportunities. This ensures that economic growth is inclusive and felt across villages, market towns and coastal communities, not solely within King's Lynn.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation to Cabinet

That Cabinet approve the West Norfolk Economic Strategy Action Plan 2026 – 2028.

REASON FOR DECISION

To provide a clear, coordinated and deliverable framework for implementing the West Norfolk Economic Strategy, informing the Council's resources and service plans alongside that of external partner to ensure that we deliver against the economic growth vision and priorities previously approved, that aligns with corporate, local and national priorities.

CORPORATE STRATEGY

How does this proposal support our Corporate Priorities [Our priorities | Corporate Strategy 2023 - 2027 | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk](#)

Promote growth and prosperity to benefit West Norfolk

The Action Plan provides a clear, deliverable framework to drive inclusive economic growth across borough through town-centre regeneration, business growth skills

	development and inward investment. It aligns local priorities with national policy and devolution opportunities, helping to ensure that economic growth supports residents, businesses and places across West Norfolk.
Protect our Environment	The Action Plan supports environmentally sustainable growth through its Managed Natural Resources priority and alignment with the Climate Change Strategy. It promotes low-carbon infrastructure, climate resilience, sustainable transport and responsible use of natural assets, ensuring that economic growth is balanced with long-term environmental protection.
Efficient and effective delivery of our services	The Action Plan provides a coordinated approach that aligns activity across Council services and with external partners, helping to maximise value for money and avoid duplication. Clear priorities, delivery arrangements and monitoring support effective decision-making and efficient use of resources, including readiness for future governance and funding changes.
Support our communities	The Action Plan places communities at the centre of economic growth, with a strong focus on inclusive growth, reducing inequalities and improving health and wellbeing. It is closely aligned with the Council's Marmot programme, addressing the wider social determinants of health such as employment, skills, housing, transport and access to services. By embedding Marmot principles across delivery, the Action Plan seeks to improve life chances, reduce health inequalities and support stronger, healthier and more resilient communities across West Norfolk.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Introduction

During 2024, the Council developed the WNES to set out a 20-year vision for supporting economic growth of the borough, to identify the priorities and investment required ahead of planned devolution. This strategy was adopted by Cabinet in early 2025 with a view to bring back a detailed action plan to provide a clear way forward for delivery of the strategy.

2. Background

The WNES was designed to provide a long-term vision for growth and prosperity across the borough. The Action Plan for the period 2026-8 supports this vision by identifying priority actions that can be delivered in the short to medium term, responding to changing economic circumstances, policy reforms and funding opportunities.

Since adoption of the Economic Strategy, there have been significant changes in the national policy landscape, including a change in national government, planned reforms to local government, devolution, planning, skills and industrial policy. The Action Plan responds to these changes and positions the Borough Council to

maximise emerging opportunities, particularly in advance of the creation of the West Norfolk Council as part of Local Government Reorganisation.

The Action Plan has been developed in collaboration with internal services and external stakeholders and integrates existing programmes where there are shared aims and objectives, for example the Marmot programme.

3. Proposal

The proposal is for Cabinet to approve the West Norfolk Economic Strategy Action Plan 2026–2028. The Action Plan provides a focused, time limited framework for delivering the priorities of the adopted Economic Strategy, translating long-term ambitions into a practical programme of actions that can be delivered over the next two years. It brings together activity across regeneration, skills, business growth, environment and healthy communities, and prepares West Norfolk for anticipated Local Government Reorganisation in 2028 by putting key priorities, partnerships and investment pipelines in place ahead of structural change. It identifies the specific projects and workstreams that relevant council services and resources will prioritise for delivery to support the achievement of WNES aims and objectives.

The Action Plan has been intentionally scoped to be achievable within the two-year period, focusing on a prioritised and deliverable set of actions rather than an exhaustive programme. It builds on existing programmes, committed resources and established partnerships, ensuring that activity can be progressed at pace without requiring significant new infrastructure or capacity. The emphasis over the 2026–2028 period is on progressing priority interventions, developing investable project pipelines and securing external funding, rather than completing all long-term outcomes within this timeframe. This approach ensures that the Action Plan is realistic, deliverable and capable of demonstrating early progress while laying the foundations for longer-term impact.

The Action Plan recognises that the Council cannot deliver these ambitions in isolation and that success will depend on strong collaboration with a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector stakeholders. This includes partners such as education and skills providers, health partners, community and voluntary organisations, landowners and developers, business representative bodies and infrastructure providers.

The Action Plan has therefore been developed in consultation with key stakeholders who have a pivotal role in delivering many of the interventions identified under each strategic priority. By clearly setting out agreed priorities, geographies and intended outcomes, the Action Plan provides confidence to partners that their activity aligns with the Council's strategic direction and investment focus.

Crucially, the Action Plan also acts as an enabling tool for stakeholders to explore, shape and unlock further funding opportunities. It provides a robust strategic framework that can be referenced within funding bids, business cases and partnership proposals, helping stakeholders demonstrate strategic fit with local priorities, corporate objectives and national policy. This shared framework

strengthens the quality and credibility of funding submissions and supports a coordinated approach to securing investment into West Norfolk.

3.1 Stakeholder and Funding Context

The Action Plan has been intentionally designed to support investment readiness and funding mobilisation across West Norfolk. It provides a clear articulation of economic challenges, priorities and proposed interventions that stakeholders can use as a strategic foundation when developing projects and seeking funding.

For external partners, the Action Plan offers:

- A clear statement of place-based economic priorities across towns and communities;
- A pipeline of priority themes and interventions aligned to national policy objectives such as productivity, skills, inclusive growth, health and climate resilience;
- Strategic alignment with the Council's Corporate Strategy, Marmot programme and Climate Change Strategy, which are increasingly required within funding assessment criteria.

This enables stakeholders to use the Action Plan as supporting evidence when bidding for government funding, devolved funding, charitable or private investment. It also allows the Council and its partners to present a coherent and coordinated narrative to funders, demonstrating that individual projects form part of a wider, agreed programme of economic renewal.

As funding opportunities emerge through devolution, Local Government Reorganisation and future national programmes, the Action Plan will provide a flexible framework through which projects can be prioritised, developed and brought forward with clear strategic rationale and partnership backing.

It is expected that many of the projects and partnerships initiated through this Action Plan will extend beyond 2028 and inform early delivery under new unitary arrangements.

3.1 Rural and Coastal Economy

West Norfolk has a large and diverse rural economy, including agri-food, tourism, small businesses and home-based enterprises, alongside dispersed communities with differing levels of access to services and employment. The Action Plan recognises that economic participation in rural areas is often shaped by connectivity, transport, digital access and proximity to services.

As such, the Action Plan includes targeted interventions to:

- Improve physical connectivity to employment, training and services
- Expand digital infrastructure, particularly in rural not-spots
- Support rural enterprise and micro-business growth, including home-based and agricultural diversification
- Strengthen the visitor economy across coastal and countryside locations
- Improve access to skills, education and lifelong learning for residents outside main urban centres

This ensures that rural areas are not only supported but act as active contributors to the borough's overall economic growth.

4. Options Considered

Option 1 – Approve the Economic Strategy Action Plan 2026–2028 (Preferred option)

This option provides clarity, direction and momentum for economic delivery during a period of change. It enables the Council and its partners to progress priority actions now, ensures alignment with corporate priorities and the Marmot programme, and positions West Norfolk strongly ahead of Local Government Reorganisation. The Action Plan is flexible, proportionate and capable of being adapted by successor authorities.

Option 2 – Do nothing / delay approval

Under this option, no Action Plan would be in place. This would risk a loss of momentum, reduced coordination across services and partners, and missed opportunities to prepare West Norfolk for future governance and funding arrangements. It would also weaken the Council's ability to clearly articulate local economic priorities during a critical transition period.

Option 3 – Develop a longer-term or more detailed strategy instead

Producing a new long-term strategy or more detailed plan at this stage would require additional time and resources and may quickly become outdated due to Local Government Reorganisation. This approach would risk delaying delivery and would not provide the practical, near-term focus required to support current programmes and investment readiness.

5. Financial Implications

The Action Plan will be delivered through a combination of:

- Existing Council budgets and officer resources
- External grant funding (including Pride in Place and other government programmes).
- Partner investment and private sector funding

Individual projects and initiatives will be subject to separate governance, business cases and financial approvals in line with the Borough Council's financial procedures.

6. HR Implications

Delivery will be supported by existing officer capacity, with additional requirements addressed through external funding, programme specific bids or partnership arrangements where necessary.

7. Policy Implications

The Action Plan directly supports delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy, Corporate Action Plan and wider policy commitments, including inclusive growth, economic resilience, climate action and place-based regeneration.

It provides a clear economic framework to support decision-making across planning, regeneration, skills, housing transport and environmental initiatives.

8. Climate Change and Environmental Implications and considerations

The Action Plan supports environmentally sustainable growth, particularly through the Managed Natural Resource strategic priority, alignment with the Climate Change Strategy and the promotion of low-carbon, resilient infrastructure and development.

9. Statutory and Legal Implications

None. There is no statutory requirement to produce an Economic Strategy Action Plan. However, the Action Plan supports delivery statutory responsibilities across planning, economic development, housing and environmental management.

10. Local Government Reorganisation Implications

The Action Plan has been developed in the context of anticipated Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk from 2028. It is intentionally time limited to prepare West Norfolk for this transition by putting key economic priorities, partnerships and investment pipelines in place ahead of structural change. This approach helps maintain delivery momentum, ensures West Norfolk's priorities are clearly defined and investment-ready, and supports continuity as new unitary arrangements are established.

The Action Plan has been developed in the context of anticipated Local Government Reorganisation in Norfolk from 2028. It is intentionally time limited to the period 2026–2028 to provide clarity, focus and deliverability during a period of transition.

This approach enables the Council and its partners to establish clear economic priorities, strengthen partnerships and develop a robust pipeline of investable projects ahead of structural change. These elements are critical in ensuring that West Norfolk is well positioned to influence and shape the economic agenda of the future unitary authority.

Whilst the Action Plan does not formally extend beyond 2028, it is designed to provide a strong evidence base and delivery framework that can inform the first phase of the successor authority. The projects, partnerships and investment pipelines developed through this Action Plan are expected to continue into the early

years of the new unitary arrangements, providing continuity and supporting a seamless transition in economic delivery.

11. Health and Safety Implications

None. Where required, appropriate health and safety assessments will be undertaken at project level prior to implementation.

12. Consultees

The Action Plan has been developed through close collaboration and informal consultations across Council services, including:

- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Planning and Housing
- Climate Change and Environment
- Public Health and Community Services

Any Statutory Consultees

There are no statutory consultation requirements associated with the approval of an Economic Strategy Action Plan. Statutory consultation will be undertaken where required for individual projects, planning processes or funding programmes arising from the Action Plan.

Other departments of the Council

The Action Plan has been developed through close collaboration across Council services, including:

- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Planning and Housing
- Climate Change and Environment
- Public Health and Community Services

Internal consultation has ensured that actions are deliverable, aligned with existing programmes and resources, and consistent with corporate governance, financial and risk management frameworks.

13. Equality Impact Assessment

The Economic Strategy Action Plan is expected to have positive equalities impacts by promoting inclusive growth, improving access to education, skills and employment, and supporting regeneration and investment in communities facing the greatest socio-economic challenges.

Delivery of the Action Plan is closely aligned with the Council's Marmot programme and its focus on addressing the wider social determinants of health, including employment, skills, housing, transport and access to services. By embedding

Marmot principles across the Healthy, Inclusive Communities priority and other strategic priorities, the Action Plan seeks to reduce health and economic inequalities and improve outcomes for disadvantaged groups and neighbourhoods.

Equality considerations will continue to be embedded in the design and delivery of individual projects, with more detailed Equality Impact Assessments undertaken where required as part of specific programme or funding approvals.

14. Risk Management Implications

Key risks include funding availability, delivery capacity, and changes to national policy or governance arrangements.

These risks will be managed through phased delivery, partnership working, annual review of the Action Plan and integration with the Council's corporate risk management framework.

The risk of over commitment within the two-year timeframe is mitigated through prioritisation, phased delivery and alignment with existing programmes and resources.

15. Conclusion

The Economic Strategy Action Plan 2026–2028 sets out a clear and deliverable framework to implement the Council's economic priorities over the next two years, bringing together regeneration, skills, productivity, environmental sustainability and health and wellbeing into a coordinated programme of action. It supports inclusive growth through alignment with the Corporate Strategy, the Marmot programme and the Climate Change Strategy. The Action Plan is intentionally time-limited to maintain momentum while preparing West Norfolk for anticipated Local Government Reorganisation in 2028. Cabinet approval will provide clarity and continuity, ensuring West Norfolk is well positioned ahead of future structural and governance changes.

Crucially, the Action Plan ensures that economic growth is balanced across the borough, with targeted actions that address the specific challenges and opportunities of rural and coastal communities alongside those of King's Lynn.

The two-year timeframe is intentionally focused to ensure deliverability and momentum, with an emphasis on progressing priority actions and establishing a strong pipeline for continued delivery beyond 2028.

LIST OF APPENDICES

West Norfolk Economic Strategy 2024

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

West Norfolk Economic Strategy 2024. Link here: West Norfolk economic strategy West Norfolk economic strategy Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

PRE SCREENING EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

For equalities profile information please visit [Norfolk Insight - Demographics and Statistics - Data Observatory](#)

Name of policy/service/function: West Norfolk Economic Strategy Action Plan 2026–2028.

Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function? (tick as appropriate)

New		Existing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened.
Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations, and identify relevant legislation.

The Economic Strategy Action Plan 2026–2028 sets out the Council’s priority actions to deliver inclusive, sustainable economic growth across West Norfolk. It focuses on town-centre regeneration, skills and employment pathways, business growth and productivity, managed natural resources, and healthy, inclusive communities. The Action Plan translates the adopted Economic Strategy into a time limited, delivery-focused programme aligned with corporate priorities, the Marmot programme, climate objectives and the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation in 2028.

Who has been consulted as part of the development of the policy/service/function? – new only (identify stakeholders consulted with)

There is no statutory requirement to produce an Economic Strategy Action Plan. However, the Action Plan supports delivery of statutory functions across planning, economic development, housing, environmental management and public health, and operates within relevant legislative frameworks.

Question Answer

1. Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service? Please tick the relevant box for each group.	Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age	x		
Disability	x			
Sex			x	
Gender Re-assignment			x	
Marriage/civil partnership			x	
Pregnancy & maternity			x	
Race	x			
Religion or belief			x	
Sexual orientation			x	
Armed forces community	x			
Care leavers	x			
Health inequalities*	x			

<p>NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p> <p><i>If potential adverse impacts are identified, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 2) will be required.</i></p> <p><i>*For more information on health inequalities please visit The King's Fund</i></p>	<p>Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)</p>				
<p>Please provide a brief explanation of the answers above:</p> <p>The Economic Strategy Action Plan is expected to have overall positive equality impacts, particularly for groups experiencing disadvantage or poorer outcomes.</p> <p>Positive impacts are anticipated for:</p> <p>Age: Through skills pathways, employment access for young people and opportunities for older workers to remain economically active.</p> <p>Disability: Via inclusive employment initiatives, accessible town-centre regeneration and improved access to services and opportunities.</p> <p>Race and low-income groups: Through targeted regeneration, skills and employment support in areas of higher deprivation.</p> <p>Armed forces community and care leavers: By improving access to skills, employment pathways and support services.</p> <p>Health inequalities: The Action Plan is closely aligned with the Council's Marmot programme, addressing the wider social determinants of health such as employment, skills, housing, transport and access to services. This is expected to contribute to reducing health inequalities and improving life chances across the borough.</p> <p>No negative impacts have been identified here.</p>					
<p>Question</p>	<p>Answer</p>	<p>Comments</p>			
<p>2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>N/A</p>			
<p>3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>N/A</p>			

If 'yes' to questions 2 - 3 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:

Decision agreed by EWG member:N/A.....

<p>4. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section</p>	No	<p>Actions: N/A</p>		
<p>5. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?</p>		No	<p>Please provide brief summary: N/A</p>	
<p>Assessment completed by:</p>	Walton Mabuto			
<p>Job title</p>	Economic Growth Officer			
<p>Date completed</p>	29/04/2026/			
<p>Reviewed by EWG member</p>	Ashley Easter, Louise Gayton & Allison Bingham	<p>Date</p>	28/04/2026/	
<p>✓ Please tick to confirm completed EIA Pre-screening Form has been shared with Corporate Policy (corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk)</p>				