

Cllr. Alistair Beales Report to Council

Date of Council Meeting 25th June 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

I will start on an unashamedly personal note. I missed Annual Council this year, I believe for the first time as an elected councillor. There was very good reason for this as my wife and I were in the United States for our elder daughter's graduation from university. Some of you will know about this, as I do bang on about it a bit, but family pride is all part of the pride care and respect we have for our community so please forgive me. We were lucky enough to see our daughter Poppy graduate from Yale on a beautiful spring day in the most wonderful surroundings and amongst parents we had got to know over the years from our daughter's involvement in Yale Field Hockey. Obviously, we were there to celebrate her academic achievements and the whole thing was very emotional and very special, but I will also refer to her field hockey exploits of which I have the human failing of being inordinately proud. It was her idea to try and get into university in the USA and all her own effort to get into Yale, so when we sent this little slip of a thing off overseas, we hoped she might learn something and hoped she would get the odd game of hockey. She did well academically and on the hockey front finished as Yale's first English captain, one of the top 10 ever goal scorers and played fifty straight games for them in the last three seasons (having suffered an injury in her first season). And again, yes, she does take after her mother.

And so to business. I mentioned in my last report how proud I was that this council had been nominated in two categories in the annual Local Government Chronicle (LGC) awards. We didn't win but for this Council to be competing at the highest level with the best run and strongest councils in the land is some achievement. We will try and evaluate what the winners did that we perhaps did not, and see if there are lessons to be learned to improve what we do.

I have updated councillors via e-mail about the latest developments with LGR and frankly that brings into question these reports. Some of my colleagues spend an enormous amount of time and effort generating them and for doubtful value given the readership seems low. If that is not the case, this full Council is an opportunity to make that clear, otherwise we will reconsider what we do as time and resource are scarce.

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

The advisory task group has been set up by Cabinet to oversee the Community Project Fund and to advise on Budget Setting. I look forward to getting meetings underway as soon as practicable.

LGR continues to demand time and resource as does the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner election which comes with a massive £2 million cost. This Council has staunchly opposed any delay to Local Elections and is a champion of democracy but to my eye, the PCC election is something of a nonsense.

I will be attending the Norfolk Leaders Group and look forward to working with the new administrations in Norwich and at Norfolk County Council. I am hopeful of being elected Chair and will advise if that comes to pass.

3 Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

Too numerous to note. My diary is available on request to anyone who is interested.