

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

29th July 2026

COUNCILLOR SIMON RING - CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS, PROPERTY AND LEISURE
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For the period 16 th June-20 th July
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There has been a considerable amount of activity across this portfolio since my previous report. The following is therefore a selection of the most significant developments and achievements, rather than an exhaustive account of every item of work undertaken by officers and partners.

1. Leisure, Sport and Healthy Communities

Our leisure facilities and Active Communities service continue to make an important contribution to prevention, health and wellbeing. During the period, activity has focused on widening participation, supporting schools and community groups, strengthening partnerships and attracting high-profile sporting events to West Norfolk.

- Hosted 750 children and 120 staff from the Ad Meliora Trust at Lynnsport to celebrate the Trust's tenth anniversary in the borough, with a programme delivered by the Active Communities Team.
- Progressed the West Norfolk Rackets and Community Sports Hub through Cabinet, supporting future participation growth and improved access to community sport.
- Granted a council lease to the Adapted Sports Hub and supported its formal launch at St Nicholas' Chapel, enabling the next phase of fundraising and delivery.
- Delivered Drowning Prevention Week activity across council pools with Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and the RNLI, promoting water safety among children and families.
- Supported Wave 17 of Swim England's national campaign and hosted the Open Swimming Championships at St James Pool.
- Launched the Jog On campaign in support of the White Ribbon initiative, using physical activity to raise awareness of violence against women and girls and to promote safer communities.
- Hosted school sports days at Lynnsport and supported the Sunny Hunny Triathlon at Oasis, bringing participants and visitors into the borough.

Capital projects and infrastructure

Significant progress is being made across the sports infrastructure programme. The emphasis remains on creating facilities that are financially sustainable, capable of increasing participation and able to deliver wider health and social value.

- Representatives from the LTA, England Netball, Norfolk Cricket and the Football Foundation visited the proposed KLA 3G site, demonstrating the project's

multi-sport potential and the opportunity to return school sports facilities to wider community use.

- Work continued on the West Norfolk Rackets and Community Sports Hub as a major investment in local sporting infrastructure.
- Sport England's Place Expansion Team visited the borough to review partnership working and discuss opportunities to maximise future investment and participation.

Culture, place and partnerships

- Supported the launch of Create King's Lynn at The Workshop, bringing cultural partners together to increase awareness of and access to cultural activity over the next two and a half years.
- Strengthened links with Creative Arts East and local cultural organisations to broaden participation and community engagement.
- Provided technical and operational support to Festival Too, drawing on the wider expertise now available following the insourcing of Alive West Norfolk services.

Taken together, this work shows the value of our leisure venues as community assets. They support physical activity, education, culture, community resilience and place-making, while also helping to raise the profile of West Norfolk as a trusted partner for regional and national organisations.

2. Business and Economic Development

The Economic Development Team continues to connect local businesses with investment, skills and supply-chain opportunities, while supporting the delivery of our wider economic strategy.

- The Meet the Buyer event at King's Lynn Town Hall attracted more than 70 local businesses and connected them with major regional projects including the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Sizewell C, the West Winch Access Road and St George's Guildhall. With tier one contractors including Skanska and Costain now appointed, there is a significant opportunity to secure local supply-chain benefits and social value.
- National Manufacturing Day activity brought students into Palm Paper, SKF Cooper, Fosters Refrigeration and Mars. The 2026 programme, planned for 24 September, has already expanded to seven employers and more than 140 students from schools, colleges and other education providers.
- Through the Rural England Prosperity Fund, nine rural businesses have been supported since April 2025 to develop products, improve premises and invest in equipment. A final application is being assessed before the fund closes on 30 September 2026.
- One business has secured support from the Norfolk County Council Business Growth Fund, with a further five applications under consideration following facilitation by the council's Economic Development Team.
- Only one industrial unit remains available at King's Lynn Enterprise Park following refreshed branding and the appointment of Brown & Co as agent. Serviced development plots are also generating strong interest.

The benefits of the Towns Fund programme are now becoming increasingly visible. The new King's Lynn library has been completed, work is under way at St George's

Guildhall and will shortly commence at the Custom House, while the dry-side facilities on South Quay are due for completion in August. These improvements will strengthen the offer for leisure craft visitors and support the Sail the Wash campaign.

The King's Lynn and Hunstanton masterplans are also approaching their final stages following extensive public and stakeholder engagement. They will provide a long-term framework for investment and should help create greater confidence for private-sector partners.

3. Property Services

Property Services is strengthening its capacity at an important time for the authority. The immediate priorities are implementation of the Corporate Landlord Model, preparation of a Strategic Asset Management Plan and ensuring that systems, compliance and data are in a strong position ahead of Local Government Reorganisation.

- Approval has been given for four additional posts. Two are expected to convert existing interim arrangements into permanent roles, with the remaining posts due to be advertised and filled by September.
- A Computer Aided Facilities Management system has been procured and is undergoing IT security checks. This is the first major step towards the Corporate Landlord Model and will improve the recording, monitoring and maintenance of compliance across the council's property portfolio.
- The next stage will be procurement of a principal contractor, with the new Corporate Landlord Model expected to be fully implemented in early 2027.
- A data audit is under way in preparation for the Strategic Asset Management Plan. Recruitment of an Estates Strategic Asset Surveyor and procurement of a fit-for-purpose property database will support delivery of the plan, which is expected in late 2026.
- The team is undertaking extensive preparatory work for Local Government Reorganisation, particularly in relation to systems, compliance and asset information.

Disposals and regeneration

- The disposal of the two caravan sites, the first major transaction under the new Disposal Strategy, is progressing towards completion.
- The sale of residential development land at Sedgeford is under way and is benefiting from the streamlined approach introduced by the strategy.
- The conditional sale of the Southend Road site to Whitbread for a Premier Inn remains in place, subject to planning.
- Property Services continues to support the King's Lynn Masterplan, represents the council as landowner in the West Winch collaboration agreement and is progressing a number of transactions at King's Lynn Enterprise Park.

4. Car Parking

The 2025/26 figures demonstrate that demand for council car parks has remained remarkably resilient following the increase in charges.

Measure	2024/25	2025/26	Change
Total recorded stays	1,729,754	1,724,388	-5,366 (-0.3%)
Machine / cash stays	905,436	1,058,084	+152,648
Cashless stays	824,318	666,304	-158,014
Total income	£5,856,577.95	£6,531,703.40	+£675,125.45 (+11.5%)

Total stays fell by only 0.3 per cent, and this small reduction was entirely attributable to fewer free parking sessions. The number of paid stays was effectively unchanged. At the same time, income rose by approximately £675,000, or 11.5 per cent, from £5.86 million to £6.53 million. This shows that the revised tariffs have delivered additional income without causing a meaningful reduction in paying customers.

- Tuesday Market Place remained the largest income generator, producing more than £1 million.
- Albert Street, Baker Lane, Boal Quay, Chapel Street, Saturday Market Place and St James Court all recorded increases in both paid stays and income.
- Demand in Hunstanton remained stable, with the increase in income broadly reflecting the revised tariffs and providing further evidence that the resort continues to attract strong visitor numbers.
- The reduction in multi-storey use requires further analysis, particularly as nearby surface car parks experienced increased demand.
- The marked movement from cashless payments to the machine category will also be examined to establish whether it reflects a genuine change in behaviour, greater use of card payments at machines or a reporting-classification issue.

Overall, the parking figures are encouraging. They demonstrate continuing demand in both King's Lynn and Hunstanton, while the additional income will help support the provision and improvement of council services.

5. Crematorium and Cemeteries

A substantial programme of essential maintenance and improvement is being delivered at Mintlyn Crematorium, with careful planning to protect service continuity and maintain a dignified experience for bereaved families.

- The customer toilet refurbishment began on 13 July and is expected to take seven weeks. The chapel is operating at reduced capacity during noisy works, but approximately 30 service slots per week are being retained, supported by additional 5.30pm services and continued morning provision for unattended direct cremations.
- The Memorial Gardens drainage project was completed during June and early July and should ensure that areas previously affected by flooding remain accessible.
- The existing 1980s sewage treatment plant has reached the end of its serviceable life. Replacement works are planned for the week commencing 10 August and will require the chapel to close for seven working days, although unattended direct cremations will continue.
- Funeral directors, ministers and celebrants attended a briefing on 22 June covering the construction programme, the move to hourly service slots from 1 September and fire-safety and evacuation procedures. The meeting was positive and reinforced the importance of open communication throughout the works.
- The Crematorium Open Day will take place on 12 September from 9.30am to 1pm, with external partners joining the team to demonstrate the collaborative work involved in providing a dignified service to West Norfolk residents.
- The former nursery site at Gayton Road Cemetery has been assessed for ground conditions, with the contractor's full report expected in August.

I would like to record my thanks to staff at Mintlyn for their flexibility and professionalism. Their careful rostering and commitment are enabling essential capital works to proceed while preserving as much service capacity as possible.

6. Conclusion

This portfolio brings together services that affect residents, businesses and visitors at every stage of life. The period has seen strong progress in leisure investment, business support, strategic property management, parking performance and essential crematorium and cemetery infrastructure. It also reflects the exceptional breadth of work being undertaken by officers and partners as the council delivers current priorities while preparing responsibly for Local Government Reorganisation.

I would like to thank all officers, contractors, volunteers and partner organisations whose work is reflected in this report.

I have met with the following officers, most of which are scheduled for further meetings in the coming months.

Duncan Hall
Kate Blakemore
Michelle Drewery
Emma Hodds
Stuart Ashworth
David Morton
Chris Black
David Gent
Anne-Marie Ketteringham
Jemma Curtis
Connor Smalls
Robin Lewis
Tim Fitzhigham
James Grant
Tim Baldwin
Phillipa Sillis
David Wiles
Hannah Wood-Handy
Nicola Cooper
Jo Stanton
Liz MacDonald
Emma Kavanagh

Apologies if I've missed some which I'm sure I have!