

Cabinet Members Report to Council

September 2026

Councillor – Jo Rust Cabinet Member for – People and Communities

For the period - 20th July – 14th September

Progress on Portfolio Matters. – Creating Communities

I attended a Love West Norfolk jobs/careers fayre on the ground floor of the office on Wednesday 22nd July. It was an amazing event which had visitors talking to potential employers as well as each other and our team. It was heartening to see so many job opportunities open to those in attendance.

The crisis resilience fund is being piloted in Downham Market to work with local stakeholders and partners to develop an Asset Based Community Development approach which builds on what's strong and not what's wrong.. It's felt that this approach will enable those in need to develop the skills and opportunities to move away from a position of crisis and need. It's very much in the early stages but this approach has delivered results for our residents in other areas.

Along with Cllr Kemp, I visited South Lynn Community Centre and had a tour of the facility and was introduced to the ambition, under the management of the Purfleet Trust, as to how it will be used going forward. They have ambitious plans as to how the community will benefit from their stewardship of the venue and I look forward to seeing this come to fruition.

I was one of several councillors who were lucky enough to attend the unveiling of a new display at the King's Lynn Museum.

Food for Thought is starting again on Wednesday September 23rd in Upwell. Well worth publicising it with your residents.

Town heritage day was on Sunday September 13th and as ever it was amazing. I love to take my grandchildren and show them how great King's Lynn is, and so do lots of others in our community. Our friends and neighbours absolutely love it. Thank you to all the volunteers who make it happen. Despite the rain, it was an amazing day with over 1000 visitors to both the Minster and the town hall.

Partnerships with Health

Like many of us I am extremely concerned to hear that some significant services provided at the QEH are under review. Maternity, ICU and A&E are being considered by the Norfolk and Waveney University Hospitals board. It's

important that we know this is a board decision, made by people that simply do not have a full and deep understanding of the area that the QEH covers. Like many of you, I will be doing all I can to ensure that this threat does not come to fruition and instead our services are retained and strengthened.

I met with a senior member of staff from the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS trust to talk about the proposed new neighbourhood mental health hub. I expressed my concern about the original proposed location in the former Samphire ward on the Chatterton House Estate. The ward is a considerable walk from the main road which makes a nonsense of the fact it's meant to be a neighbourhood MH hub. It's not on any bus routes either. It absolutely does not replace the former in-patient unit and it's a huge concern that residents who need support for their MH have to either be looked after out of county, or in Norwich. While the hub, should an appropriate venue be found, will definitely have some benefits to those in need, without funding to resource it, I remain concerned about its viability. The most recent news is that the original proposal is no longer being considered, which is good news and shows that at a borough level, our representations can make a difference. Much like the QEH, it often feels like resources are concentrated in Norwich and in the west of the county we are the poor relations.

Skills

I attended the launch of the Future Talent Tech event at the library. It was amazing to see so many young people engaged at the event, although I did observe there were far fewer girls in attendance. While our authority has no statutory responsibility for learning and skills, we recognise how important it is to provide young people with opportunities and aspirations and supporting events like this enable us to support not just the people involved, but the businesses who need these tech skills. On Wednesday 16th I'll be attending the Open Roads aware evening, where the achievements of young people are recognised. Open Road is another local organisations that provides opportunities for our young people to gain skills and qualifications which otherwise they might not get. The following week – 24th September, is National Manufacturing Day and many of our local manufacturing firms have opened their doors to the public, schools and local communities. 140 places have been provided which will given young people a behind-the-scenes look at modern manufacturing careers, apprenticeships and high skilled job. The industry will celebrate the diversity of what's on offer.

Housing and Homelessness

Our housing needs assessment, which identifies what type of housing we need and where we need it to be has been drafted. Importantly it also looks at the tenure type that we need. Our Housing Delivery strategy, which has yet to be finalised, will set out how we will deliver what is needed, making sure we provide the right type of housing, of the right tenure, in the right locations. This is a vital piece of work and could be the answer to helping unlock our economic growth and development and attract businesses to invest in our area.

Housing Standards

Nothing to report

Beat Your Bills**Community Transport**

Community transport continue to play an important part in our economic growth and I'm so pleased that we now have a new cabinet member with all the skills needed to push transport forward. I look forward to working with Cllr Ratcliffe to improve the community transport our residents value so much

Assets of Community Value and Bus Shelters

UKPN have now disconnected the power from all the bus shelters in the unparished area of King's Lynn and Westcotec will be starting the replacement imminently.

Healthier Lives strategy

There have been two health and wellbeing Partnership meetings where ourselves and our key partners in health and the VCES sector come together and share our future, funding opportunities and progress on health prevention. The most recent meeting included a presentation from Carolyn Patterson of the College of West Anglia informing us of the work experience project she was involved with providing work experience opportunities in health and social care. This is an often-overlooked area as many don't perceive health and social care to be a career that's worth pursuing as it's often minimum wage. However, Carolyn presented some great opportunities and made the case for care.

Youth

As briefly mentioned earlier in the report, I attended the unveiling of a new display at the King's Lynn museum. It was curated by a group of children who are home educated. They had the opportunity to be museum curators for 4 days and they then presented their display and gave those present a tour of the museum, explaining each section. They were an amazing group who demonstrated all the attributes needed to succeed in life – they were articulate, they spoke clearly and knowledgeably about their subject areas in front of an audience of mainly strangers.

Safeguarding

We are awaiting the commencement of a new officer who will progress the work on our safeguarding policy. The team have completed a Section 11 self-assessment, which is a statutory audit tool that organisations like ours use to evaluate and improve how we safeguard and promote the welfare of children. It places a statutory duty on our organisation to make arrangements to ensure that in discharging our functions we have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Customer relations and CIC

The CIC took 31955 calls in quarter one and have an 80% customer satisfaction rate. They deal with our customers in such a way as to negate the need for a follow on call. They are now in the process of introducing voice

recognition for customers, rather than the lengthy Press 1 for, Press 2 for.
This will improve customer experience further.