

Cabinet Member's Report to Council

29 October 2026

Councillor Josie Ratcliffe – Cabinet Member for Transport Strategy and Car Parking

Report to Council for the period 14 September to 20 October 2026

1 Progress on Portfolio Matters

My current focus is on the Transport and Parking Strategies for King's Lynn, which sit within the framework of the King's Lynn Masterplan. The Masterplan is a vision for King's Lynn town centre which puts residents, businesses, visitors and the town's unique culture and heritage at its heart.

Transport Policies and Joint Implementation

The updated King's Lynn Transport Strategy has been adopted by the Borough Council. It sets out how transport in and around King's Lynn could improve over the coming years, looking at how people travel today and what changes are needed to support the town as it grows. It focuses on supporting new homes and jobs, improving access to shops and services, and encouraging healthier and more sustainable ways to travel.

Looking ahead to 2035, the Strategy identifies a range of possible transport improvements, including:

- Better walking and cycling routes
- Improved public transport connections
- Upgrades to key roads and junctions
- Transport support for new housing and employment areas
- Improvements to the town centre and historic areas

The Strategy also includes an Implementation Plan which sets out potential projects that could be delivered when funding becomes available.

www.west-norfolk.gov.uk/info/20241/strategies_and_plans

Bus service to Downham Market railway station

A new bus service is now operating from Swaffham to Downham Market railway station. It's timed to connect with southbound trains and runs Monday to Saturday. Central Connect run the service and the timetable can be found at:

www.central-connect.co.uk/services/KCTB/67

Car Parking

King's Lynn Car Parking Strategy is being developed in relation to emerging land use, economic development and regeneration, and transport and climate change policies and plans. It will help ensure that the needs of existing and future businesses and residents within the borough, as well as visitors and commuters to the town, will be met (including increasing the number of "accessible" spaces). King's Lynn has a large rural catchment, so the Strategy will aim to maintain car parking provision while making more efficient use of town centre land.

The Borough Council operates car parks in King's Lynn, Hunstanton, Heacham and Burnham Market. Parking charges and permits are under review, along with potential installation of barriers and technology to manage car parks more efficiently. For example, St James' multi-storey short-stay car park (PE30 1BT) is in a great location close to the town centre, but it is under-utilised and always has spaces. However, we are aware the lighting needs to be better so users feel safer; and this is a proposed improvement.

Portfolio Briefings

I would like to thank the officers who are briefing me on my other portfolio responsibilities:

- Cemeteries and Crematorium
- CCTV
- ICT
- Customer Complaints
- Data Protection, Freedom of Information and GDPR

As I get up to speed on these areas of council activities, I will expand my future reports to Council.

The 'Fen Line' Railway Line

I have been asked to provide regular updates on railway services in West Norfolk. Unfortunately, users of our railway line have suffered far too many delays and cancellations this year. Outside the council, I am on the committee of the Fen Line Users Association (FLUA), which is the primary organisation lobbying on behalf of rail travellers in West Norfolk, and they are in constant contact with operators in the rail industry about the catalogue of current issues.

FLUA works on maintaining and developing services between the Fen Line stations (King's Lynn, Watlington, Downham Market, Littleport, Ely, Waterbeach, and Cambridge North) and onwards to Cambridge and London. FLUA sends a detailed newsletter, "The Fenliner", to its members several times per year. The September 2026 edition includes these topics:

- Fen Line services in freefall
- New "Fen Line Action Plan" now offers hope?
- Overhead Line Equipment

- Problems with the Class 379s
- Keeping up the pressure for improvements
- Cambridge South
- GBR - Not just a paint job?
- When is a cycle space not a cycle space?
- New bus route serving Downham Market station!

Please ask me if you would like to receive a copy of The Fenliner. Councillors and officers can request to join the mailing list for future editions.

Representatives of the rail industry attend FLUA's AGM to give members the opportunity to raise issues with key staff from across the network (who will likely receive intense questioning this year). The 2026 AGM is 14th November at Waterbeach, at a venue within walking distance of the station. The AGM is open to current members, and to new members if they join FLUA beforehand or at the start of the AGM.

www.flua.org.uk

2 Forthcoming Activities and Developments

Joint Panel 11 November 2026

Borough Councillors have been invited to a Joint Panel Meeting on Wednesday 11th November to consider the King's Lynn Masterplan and Parking Strategy, prior to its consideration by Cabinet.