

CABINET MEMBERS REPORT TO COUNCIL

29TH AUGUST 2024

COUNCILLOR SIMON RING – DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS AND CULTURE

27 June – 29 August 2024

Whilst much of this period has been holiday time, it has been a very busy period.

Business

I attended a very interesting and interactive Employment and Skills event at the Place. There was a really good, diverse range of contributors, both local and County based and good networking for everyone was evidenced. There seems to be a real desire to connect Council, with Volunteers, with Business, to create a direct flow of effort to produce the opportunities for people to develop and use their skills.

Wes Norfolk Shared Prosperity Fund

- Love Your Town 24-25 has launched with grants up to £2,000 available for projects in King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton which generate activity and improve footfall. The scheme has a total budget of £20,000 which is 50% funded by UKSPF and 50% from NCC. Applications are invited to be submitted by 5pm on 13 September 2024. It'd be wonderful if all Councillors could share the following links to residents.

[Love Your Town | Love Your Town | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

We had some fantastic projects from round 1 earlier this year; I would urge businesses and organisations to be as creative as possible with projects and can't wait to see the response later in September.

- King's Lynn gutter clearance scheme is in early stages – premises around the King's Lynn town centre will be given the opportunity to access gutter cleaning, maintenance and repairs funded 100% via UKSPF. Information to be provided to premises over the coming months.
- Year 3 projects which received funding through the Year 3 project call have all commenced and are in delivery stages (VENI People & Place, Restoring West Norfolk's Peatlands for All, Active Communities, Volunteer it Yourself, Tech Skills for Life and On Track KL&WN). Here are links to the projects [West Norfolk Shared Prosperity Funded projects | West Norfolk Shared Prosperity Funded projects | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)
- The cycle hire scheme and associated community cycling events are in full delivery at Lynnsport. <https://www.alivewestnorfolk.co.uk/activities/cycle-hire/>
- Go Green Communities is pending imminent launch – to support community groups and organisations in improving the environmental efficiency and green credentials of community buildings across West Norfolk. This project is being delivered via Community Action Norfolk who will deliver information and training workshops on issues such as net zero improvements, how to

create a decarbonisation plan and how to apply for funding. This will be supported by a small grant scheme with grants available up to £8,000 to cover 75% of the costs in implementing subsequent decarbonisation improvements.

- Tourism Ambassador programme under development via Visit West Norfolk.
- Opportunities to access West Norfolk Training grants of up to £3,000 to fund up to 75% of employee training costs are still available to businesses across West Norfolk. This opportunity will be closing in the autumn of 2024 so applications should be submitted as soon as possible. [West Norfolk Training Grants | West Norfolk Training Grants | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

REPF

- West Norfolk Rural Business Capital Grant Scheme still open. Grants of between £10,000 - £100,000 are available to fund up to 50% of costs for small and medium businesses across West Norfolk to develop new products and facilities that will be of wider benefit to the local economy and for the development and promotion of the visitor economy. Again applications should be submitted as soon as possible as works must be completed by 31 December 2024. [West Norfolk Rural Business Capital Grants | West Norfolk Rural Business Capital Grants | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk \(west-norfolk.gov.uk\)](#)

King's Lynn Enterprise Park

- Site infrastructure works to the eastern part of the Enterprise Park are completing this month which will open up the access to the phase 1 units, and plots for businesses.
- New KL Enterprise Park branding and marketing strategy is being developed ready for formal launch in September which will mark the start of a more concerted effort to promote the opportunities at the park for growing businesses.

Asset Management

- As part of our drive and priority to balance the books and manage the projected deficit position of the Council in the next few years we need to both look at how we reduce costs but also where we can increase income to support services and a workstream is currently in place to support this. One area in my portfolio is property and I have asked for, and work is taking place on, an Asset Management Strategy to urgently give a clear outline and plan to support meeting the financial pressures we face. As part of this, and with my background career in the financial services sector, I have asked that the investment portfolio is reviewed to ensure this delivers returns in line with the market for the Council as part of Medium-Term Financial Strategy and supports the fundamental need to be a financially sustainable council. To be clear as an investment portfolio this means active asset management and achieving market rents and returns with potential investment in parts of the portfolio, disposals and acquisitions, and ensuring we deliver a good level of service to our tenants as you would expect from any reputable property investor.
- I am conscious that to achieve some of this the team will need to look at resource and skills to support this work along with our asset management capabilities and I have asked that this is taken forward and reported back to me in the next quarter (Q3) in readiness for the budget along with a plan for

the approval of the Asset Management Strategy.

Economic Strategy

- Following extensive consultation and engagement and analysis, a draft strategy is emerging which will be shared with members in September before going to cabinet for approval later in the year. This strategy is crucial to help us achieve our corporate objectives for future growth and prosperity in west Norfolk and to guide priorities for future investment and economic development activities in west Norfolk. Along with the Car Parking strategy and the Cultural and Heritage strategy, we will have some valuable tools to help us to inform the plans for future growth and prosperity.

Business Awards 2025

- We will be once again sponsoring the Mayor's Business Awards and I am working with Iliffe Media on the planning. We have lost to retirement our Business Officer, Paul Harrison this year, and whilst that post remains unfilled I would welcome the support of any and all Councillors in the hunt for appropriate nominations from businesses across our Borough. I will be emailing Councillors with more details soon.

Leisure

I am very grateful for staff at Alive to have compiled some activity details as follows:

Attendances continue to perform well with Q1 5% up on the same period last year at 380k attendances across all areas.

Town Hall up 60%,
Community up 18%,
Stories up 9%,
Theatre up 6%,
Leisure up 5%,
Sports Participation up 4%
Fitness up 11%,

Leisure Memberships are selling well. As of 17 July 2024 – 1,032 agreements have been sold vs 829 in the same period last year (+203) a 24% increase.

July saw the conclusion of the LTA Youth Start Tennis programme, which 17 children between the ages of 4yrs-11yrs took part in, receiving a six weeks of coaching from our team plus lots of goodies such as a tennis racket, branded t-shirt, tennis balls and sweat bands.

The Active Community Team have been busy with 116% increase in attendance at community sessions for Q1 compared to the same time last year.

Just Move Community Falls Prevention Initiative launched in March 2024, and has now serviced 91 referrals. 80 of which have been self-referrals through AWN own marketing campaigns. 8 sites now host weekly Chair Aerobic classes. Of the 23 who have completed the programme as far 96% have improved their TUG test scores, 87% increased their ability to repeatedly stand from sitting and 96% of participants have improved their balance after the 10 week programme. Working

with PHE and Active Norfolk via the Better Care Fund we are now introducing bridging classes for those who have completed their 10 weeks to enable them to progress into more mainstream activities.

Member retention remains a huge focus with increasing competition, we continue to diversify our leisure offering with the introduction of new and exciting engagement events outside of our extensive standard timetable. Using a variety of natural settings and technology, over 50 members have participated in a variety of events such as 'Powerwave in the park' (The Walks), Beach Bootcamp (Hunstanton promenade and beach front) and Tour De'Alive (Lynnsport group cycling studio). Member feedback in person and on social media has been fantastic.

Lynnsport introduced a new session in the Kaset skate park! Named 'The Drop In' to reflect; a DROP-IN price, a DROP-IN Activity type and making reference to skaters/riders using the 'DROP' ramp, it is hoped this session may go some way to tackling local anti-social behaviour problems. Local youths can obtain a greatly discounted entry fee, play pool for free, socialise with other like-minded youths and generally hang out in a safe, supervised space. We have high hopes for this exciting addition to our programme thanks to the suggestion of Cllr Ben Jones, and are engaging with other partners to grow the session and make it sustainable and beneficial to the local youth community. We have been in touch with the NCC Youth Justice Service to deliver 'Street First Aid' sessions. Street first Aid is aimed at 12-18rs (our key target demographic for this session) teaches life saving techniques using real life scenarios that youths are more likely to experience, such as unconscious casualties, intoxication (drink/drugs), blood loss through knife injuries, CPR, seizures and more. We're also engaging with TYSS (Targeted Youth Support Services), the Police and Youth Workers to deliver bike marking sessions and youth counselling services as part of this project.

Oasis Hunstanton are extremely excited to be working in partnership with the RNLI, and BCKLWN resorts team to deliver SWIM SAFE this summer holidays. Swim Safe is a fun and free water safety activity for children created by Swim England and the RNLI that takes place in the summer, teaching participants how to stay safe in open water. The project was part funded by the Hunstanton rotary club whom paid for Cathryn Hancock (Oasis Duty officer and swim teacher) to qualify as a Swim safe lead, and the remaining funding was through the Resorts team to backfill the Oasis delivery team to host the sessions. More information on Swim safe can be found here: [About Swim Safe](#).

As I am sure you are all aware, Cabinet, with the support of E & C and Joint Panels, agreed to bring back into direct management everything that is currently run by Alive West Norfolk.

Tourism and Marketing

West Norfolk Tourism Development Plan - Actions

The Tourism department is working on actions directly related to the six strategic aims highlighted within the West Norfolk Tourism Development Plan 2022-26. We are preparing a full summary of progress with all such actions for presentation to members and stakeholders at the forthcoming Tourism Informal Working Group Update Meeting (Aug 2024).

The East Anglia LVEP

Visit East of England was supported by the Tourism department and the rest of the

existing Norfolk DMOs (Destination Management Organisations) in their Summer 2024 application to become a nationally-recognised LVEP (the East Anglia Local Visitor Economy Partnership). In July 2024 this LVEP application to VisitEngland was successful. As well as a nationally recognised official status, LVEPs have access to resources and guidance from VisitBritain/VisitEngland in areas including expert advice, dedicated toolkits and training programmes in areas ranging from product distribution, accessibility and sustainability to business support and marketing. An important strand of support will be highlighting available Government funding streams as well as developing and providing a 'toolkit' to help LVEPs with bids to those streams.

The new Suffolk-Norfolk LVEP joins the likes of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, the Peak District, Kent, Cumbria, the Cotswolds and Yorkshire as well as cities including London, Birmingham, Manchester and Liverpool.

Other Partnership Working

West Norfolk VENI Steering Group - The Tourism department is now an active member of this steering group after it was recently granted SPF funding to roll out a programme of business support to the west Norfolk tourism industry. A business breakfast event is to be held by the VENI group at the College of West Anglia on 29th of August 2024, with the tourism department in attendance.

Downham Market Business and Tourism Group – The Tourism department has been invited to become a member of this newly-formed group and its aims to increase footfall within the Downham Market town centre and the wider area. The department will be attending its first meeting with the new group in late August 2024.

Shared Prosperity Fund Projects

The Tourism department is conducting ongoing work on a set of current SPF funded projects, which include the production and promotion of an online West Norfolk Ambassadors Course for the benefit of tourism and hospitality staff (the content of this e-learning course intermingling the importance of civic pride, local historical and cultural awareness, and customer care advice), regeneration of items at the West Lynn Pavilion, and enhancements to certain Downham Market Town Centre public realm assets.

The Council needs to create a Comms and Marketing department that creates a plan to promote West Norfolk and all we have to offer. I have asked for a report to come back to me on its creation and the beginnings of a marketing strategy.

Heritage

Cabinet have approved the Guildhall Project Board to advance to RIBA stage 4 with the option 1 Full Proposal. This is an exciting time for the Heritage in the Borough with Custom House also expected to receive significant maintenance and County Council have opened up the process for the future community use of the Carnegie Library. The response regarding the Carnegie has been very positive so far and I will update Council when there is news.

Meetings Attended and Meetings Scheduled

I have had numerous meetings with officers and outside bodies

Officers

Lorraine Gore
Debbie Gates
Oliver Judges
Duncan Hall
Martin Chisholm
Jemma Curtis
Tim Fitzhigham
Honor Howell
James Grant
James Arrandale
Alexa Baker
Tommy Goode
Lynne Fawkes

Outside bodies

Civic Society
Hunstanton Action Group
Conservancy Board
Town Deal Board
BID
The Garage
Museum Services

I have regular scheduled meetings with most of the above officers and will continue to meet and fact find with outside bodies including those already met with.