

YEAR 2023-24 DISTRICT COUNCIL PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Liberal Democrats were re-elected for a second 4-year term in May last year taking 25 of the 40 seats and immediately started to prepare the 2023-27 Corporate Plan and Delivery Plan. We have made significant progress in areas of core service delivery during the year in the face of unprecedented financial challenges set by central government across all local authorities. These include the following:

- A new District-wide Local Plan setting planning policies and site allocations until 2036 was submitted to the Government last May and is currently undergoing examination by the Inspector for adoption later this year. A planning service improvement plan will be developed this year to identify where positive changes are needed in planning service delivery for all service users.
- Completion of a new Economic Strategy and Action Plan to support infrastructure for growth and skills for jobs to enable local businesses to develop and thrive. The Rural Business and Communities Grant funded by the Rural England UK Shared Prosperity Fund was launched last year to allocate £630k to support local businesses.
- Work has been completed on time and within budget in North Walsham with Heritage Action Zone Improvement Grant funding to 11 buildings with associated street works. Works to install the new solar carport at The Reef Leisure Centre in Sheringham were completed last July. The High Street task force has started a scheme to improve Stalham town centre. Major investment to repair Cromer Pier was also carried out without recourse to any borrowing.
- Successfully allocated UK Shared Prosperity Funding as one of the top 5% of Councils in the country to achieve this delivering high quality skills training and improving life chances by supporting pay, productivity and employment for our residents.
- We have invested in new public toilets in North Walsham, Fakenham, Sheringham and Holt to include new Changing Places facilities for the benefit of local people and visitors. A total of seven principal towns will have had either new or improved facilities by the end of the year.
- As part of our commitment to improve our environment, the Council's carbon footprint has reduced by more than 50% and the target set when we took office in 2019 to plant 110,000 trees (one for each resident) has been surpassed by 5,000.
- The Council continues to meet the challenge from Government to control nutrient pollution in our water catchment area of the Wensum and The Broads and is working with a syndicate of district councils across Norfolk on a strategy to unlock delayed building sites. Further announcements will follow during the next 3-6 months.
- The Council continues its highly successful program of investment in properties for Temporary Accommodation with up to 25 properties providing vital protection for displaced families within our community. The team have spoken with smaller housing associations and developers who are keen to bring more affordable homes to North Norfolk. The Housing team have been under increased pressure this year as we see a rise this year of 47% of people presenting in desperate need of homes. With a vastly reduced number of social homes being built due to Government Neutrient Neutrality rules, the end of the current local plan and building costs.

- NNDC Energy team managed to secure over 40 percent of the County wide funding from Norfolk Warm Homes. Proactively reaching out to communities in the District to offer home energy improvements. This will continue when the next round of grants are announced.

- Social Prescribing service won the Norfolk and Waveney award for Social Prescribing of the Year. I am incredibly proud and passionate of this service. They help those residents that need an extra hand when dealing with every day life.

The Benefits team continue to distribute funds and grants to those in need of more support, in addition to Housing and Council Tax support. Our Financial Inclusion team give budgeting advice and have a Citizens Advice link in house for more complex cases.

We continue to perform well above national targets in collecting Council Tax, Business Rates, win more Planning Appeals in Norfolk than any other Council and Decisions on domestic applications, Building Control management, meeting our affordable housing targets to name just a few of our services.

- Coastwise funded by Government together with the Council is a nationally significant pilot scheme to prepare us for coastal climate change outcomes and its potential for future coastal erosion. The Council award winning team won a bid for a multi-million-pound grant to trial a program to replace property at risk, improve and replace community infrastructure and re-purposing land at risk whilst restoring habitats I coastal locations. Defenses are being provided at Bacton and Mundesley under the scheme.

- Last September the Local Government Association carried out an independent Peer Review of how the Council conducts its business and delivers services to residents, communities, businesses and visitors alike. It concluded that the Council performs well in caring and delivering for residents and gave a 4 (very good) out of 5 (excellent) rating. Housing and peoples services were given special praise. The Council will continue to work proactively to achieve the highest category.

Latest News

- We have secured funding to repair the building housing The RNLI Museum and the Rocket House café in Cromer. These two facilities not only provide support to our tourist economy but also provide disabled access to the beach area and toilet facilities in the area.
- We have today announced we have retained our Blue Flags and regained the award for the East Runton Beach.

As always if I can be of help or assistance please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Sarah Butikofer

District Councillor for Priory Ward