

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025-26 FOR ALL PARISH COUNCILS IN STUDY WARD

As annual meetings are conducted across the District, I would like to summarise the most notable achievements and challenges to North Norfolk DC for the May 2025 to May 2026 civic year. The Council's Corporate Plan available online sets out the aims and objectives for the civic year and its progress is monitored and published quarterly by Cabinet. In order of importance:-

1. Local Government Reorganisation

The Council submitted a proposal in support of the 3 unitary model with the district being transferred into the Eastern Sector in its entirety. The single or two alternatives proposed by other councils was rejected by the Government. Due to start on 1 April 2028.

2. The Local Development Plan

This was adopted in December and succeeded in suppressing new dwelling numbers to under 60% of Government requirements on the condition that a review would start in June this year and be completed by early 2029. The Plan also brings together measures to update our planning policies which developers need to satisfy in order to obtain permissions especially on sites allocated for new dwellings.

3. Food Waste Collections

Due to be introduced this year but has been delayed until next year due to funding shortfall from central government. Disruption to existing services to fit in the collection of food waste will need to be worked on to minimize inconvenience.

4. Coastal Protection Schemes

Successful in getting more funding from the Government to continue the groundbreaking work off the Cromer and Mundesley coastlines. Pilot home insurance schemes being investigated for erosion protection similar to the "Flood Re" flood schemes.

5. Fakenham Leisure and Sports Club

Construction work started on the swimming pool, new 3G football pitch and other facilities in October 2025. Expected to be completed on time and on budget.

6. Second Homes Council Tax

Negotiations were completed with the County Council, Police and Fire Authorities to rebate 25% of the 2nd homes premium to enable investment on housing schemes for homeless and eventually to support affordable housing schemes.

7. Temporary Accommodation Acquisitions

The Council has now purchased 32 houses, with the promise of further units, to provide emergency temporary accommodation for those declared homeless since the Lib Dem administration took over in 2019 when previously none existed. This saves significant expenditure on bed and breakfast costs quite often spent outside the District with all the attendant disruption it causes for families.

8. Affordable Homes

A programme with partners of new affordable homes developments has delivered 307 new homes between March 2025-27 (76 in 2025/6 and 231 proposed in 2026/7) with schemes at Sheringham, Bacton, Wells Walcott and Fakenham.

9. Car Parking Charges Review

Car parking revenue is a very important revenue stream for the Council so the decision was taken to increase parking charges and season ticket prices by 3.6% in line with annual inflation. All three categories of standard, coastal and resort car parks were increased to 0.60p, £1.10 and £1.10 respectively for up to 30 minutes and rising to £3.10, £6.10 and £8.80 for 4 hours.

10. County Council Election

Finally, as you will be aware, I was fortunate to win the election for the Holt County Council Division on 7 May. It should be noted that all candidates conducted a civilized campaign although I caught Covid and suffered with sciatica as if the work to win wasn't challenging enough! I am very pleased to succeed our MP Steffan Aquarone as the county councillor for this area.

The result for the record was 1,783 (LD) 1,336 (Reform) 817 (Con) 350 (others). Maj 447. 50.67 Turnout. Across the District the Lib Dems took 7 of the 10 seats with Tories on 2 and Reform on just 1. Electorate 8,494 with 4,304 ballot papers issued.

Thank you for reading my report and please get in touch if you need any help on 07970 298695 or at andrew.brown@north-norfolk.gov.uk.

Cllr Andrew Brown

End

17/5/26