

From NNDC

### Planning

The current phase of the new Local Plan examination is complete. There may be modifications to the plan coming out of these hearings which will go out to public consultation and possibly another round of Hearings. The new Local Plan hopefully will be finalised by the autumn.

There is a new national system of accreditation for surveyors working in building control. Surveyors employed by NNDC have undertaken the necessary validation process.

A government consultation on the expansion of certain permitted development rights (ie development which does not require a planning application) runs till 9th April.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/changes-to-various-permitted-development-rights-consultation/changes-to-various-permitted-development-rights-consultation>

### Benefits

The Household Support Fund has been extended to September 2024. This helps the most vulnerable households with the cost of essentials. NNDC operates an emergency support fund for help with grocery costs.

From 6th April it will be easier to obtain a Debt Relief Order which means more residents can access debt relief.

There will be 53 Mondays in the financial year 24/25 which means those on Universal Credit miss out on a week's Housing Costs.

Almost £100k has been allocated in Discretionary Housing Payments to support tenancy issues, homelessness prevention and to support people to stay within the community.

As of 29th February, there were 2490 households on the housing waiting list. 227 homes were let so far this year. There were 54 households in temporary accommodation (down 22% from Feb 23) and 9 rough sleepers in February.

38 affordable homes will be completed in 23/24.

Eligibility criteria for warm homes grants have been simplified. These are for homes with energy ratings of D-G. This is well worth applying for: get in touch with me if you're interested.

The Integrated Housing Adaptations Team have spent over £1 mill of Disabled Facilities Grant to enable residents to stay in their own homes.

There are 93 Ukrainian guests in North Norfolk.

### Finance

The Council Tax premium of long term empty properties (an additional 100% after 12 months) starts 1st April.

### Licensing

The consultation on the increase in taxi fares by 15% has concluded and new fares are in place.

#### Environmental services

The Great British Spring Clean runs until the end of March. Litter picking sets are available to borrow from NNDC at any time.

Information should have been sent to you by Serco about the new waste rounds change starting April 8th. As ever, contact me with problems though apparently the Serco Customer Care Centre is more efficient. Public Space Protection Orders regarding dog restrictions are out for consultation till 11th April.

#### Property Services

Work on the Albert Street, Holt toilets will start shortly.

#### Customer Service

The average wait time for residents calling into NNDC was 3 mins 31 sec'

#### Other news

##### BLAKENEY SURGERY

The Integrated Care Board is asking for more feedback on the proposed closure of Blakeney Surgery by April 2nd. However as before the focus is - erroneously - on the withdrawal of medicines collection from Blakeney not the withdrawal of face to face appointments which were taken away without the correct process. The decision to close the surgery permanently will now be made May 7th. Please join us in writing to object to the withdrawal of both doctor and nurse appointments (and the withdrawal of medicines collections) to [nwcb.contactus@nhs.net](mailto:nwcb.contactus@nhs.net) with a copy to Sadie Parker ([Sadie.parker@nhs.net](mailto:Sadie.parker@nhs.net)) by April 2nd to express your views. We will be writing to the Secretary of State for Health to ask for her intervention against the proposed closure.

#### Digital switchover

This is an industry led switch to digital landlines with the old analogue lines switched off by the end of 2025.

To be sure, vulnerable customers, ie those who are dependent on landlines, need to contact their provider about they should be preparing for this change. I would encourage you to reach out to those who you think are in this category.

If residents do not have a mobile, they will be provided with a battery back up unit by their providers for power cuts.

There will be no extra cost to residents who can continue to use their existing handsets.

I have lots of questions about how this will work given our poor mobile phone and broadband coverage and am chasing answers from our MP.

