

District Cllrs Report Feb 2024

From NNDC

#### Democratic services

Democratic Services can now help with temporary clerking support for councils and providing advice to chairmen and Cllrs and procedural matters.

#### Coastal

The Shoreline Management Plan Data Explorer has now been launched:

[Home | Shoreline Management Plans \(data.gov.uk\)](#)

We are in SMP5 and 6. This new digital tool makes for easier access to Shoreline Management Plans which identify the most sustainable approach for managing the risk from coastal flooding and erosion over the short (0-20 years), medium (20-50 years), and long term (50-100 years).

#### Planning

The new Local Plan is undergoing examination. The Inspector has been discussing key matters, issues and questions with professionals and members of the public. There may be modifications to the plan coming out of these hearings which will go out to public consultation.

Wells Neighbourhood Plan is in the examination phase.

The long awaited 10% Biodiversity Net Gain is now required for major developments, am still come in for other developments 2nd April this year.

Councils affected by nutrient neutrality can share in £9.6 mill awarded on their behalf to Broadland DC who are the formal decision makers with input from the various Planning Directors to ensure distribution across all areas affected.

Norfolk Environmental Credits ( of which NNDC is a shareholder) has started selling its first nutrient neutrality credits.

Part of the Planning Service Improvement Plan is to introduce a new Local Validation List to set out what information and documents are needed to submit a planning application. This will go out to public consultation.

#### Benefits

The Financial Inclusion team has generated £680k in additional income for households struggling financially in North Norfolk. They increase income to households by unclaimed benefits, council to support and food and energy grants and vouchers. If anyone would like to be referred, please email [financial.inclusion@north-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:financial.inclusion@north-norfolk.gov.uk).

Almost £86k has been awarded in Discretionary Housing Payments to support tenancy cues, homelessness prevention and to support people to stay within the community. As of 31st January there were 2546 households on the housing waiting list. 197 homes were let so far this year. There were 61 households in temporary accommodation and 7 rough sleepers in January.

NNDC was able to purchase 11 additional affordable homes with government funding some of which are now available to rent. Another four were purchased for refugees. There are 350 affordable homes in the pipeline of which 38 will be completed in 23/24. I am chairing a Task & Finish Group ( a sub group of the Overview & Scrutiny Cttee) looking into causes and prevention of and solutions to homelessness. We hope to report back in a couple of months which will explain what more we can do to reduce the number of homeless households in our district.

The Integrated Housing Adaptations Team have spent over £1 mill of Disabled Facilities Grant.

#### Sustainable growth

At a January Business event, 83% of businessmen and women said they were optimistic about the future. The greatest challenges given was recruiting and training staff, financial stability, workforce development, transport and availability of sites.

Grants of £389k from the Rural England Prosperity Fund have been offered to businesses and comment groups for net zero infrastructure, diversification of rural businesses, funding for community groups and volunteering.

Grants of £311k from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund have been awarded to community infrastructure projects, the local visitor economy, supporting digitalisation and developing a business support programme.

#### Environmental services

Serco is proposing another rounds change starting April 8th, caused by the change in location of the waste disposal site for recyclables. There will be information coming out from Serco very shortly. Let's hope that it's better implemented than last time! As ever, contact me with problems though apparently the Serco Customer Care Centre is working well.

Complaints to the Private Sector Housing team have increased, mainly around damp and mould. Please contact me if you have any problems.

#### Finance

By the time you read this the budget will have been agreed. £975k of savings been identified with another £ 250k still to be identified. This means the use of reserves is low. These savings are mostly from streamlining internal processes.

#### Customer service

Call wait times were down to 2min 41sec in January with 71% queries answered by the Customer Service team.'

#### Other news

##### **BANKING HUB TO COME TO HOLT**

As a result of much hard work, Holt has secured a full banking hub. Given the closure of all the banks, this will be a lifeline for all the surrounding villages and communities that need a banking service locally. The process will now be that an organisation called Cash Access UK will assess and find suitable premises. They will then work to perhaps have a different banking organisation visit the hub, one day a week, every week. The details are yet to be finalised.

##### **BLAKENEY SURGERY**

Health bosses ( in the form of the Integrated Care Board) met last month to decide the fate of Blakeney Surgery. The good news is they didn't agree to close it, but unfortunately they didn't decide to keep it open. What they did agree was another round of consultation with patients, which sounds good except that it will only be about how and where we Blakeney patients get our meds.

Let me explain how this is wrong.

Our ability to see a GP or nurse at Blakeney was taken away before Covid. If we had been consulted at that time - as was our right - we would have protested strongly. But we weren't given that opportunity.

We asked health bosses if they would do that consultation now, but so far they have refused, saying it would be inappropriate to do this now for something that happened in the past. They have only offered to ask our opinion regarding the meds collection which is all that Blakeney now offers.

This is hugely disappointing. Blakeney Parish Council has been fighting for three years to keep Blakeney Surgery open and offering doctor and nurse appointments as well as meds. We know how much this means to you. After all, 1500 of you signed our petition to Save Blakeney Surgery and many hundreds wrote letters and filled in questionnaires. We know you don't want to make a major expedition to get to one of the other surgeries, or feel you live in a healthcare desert.

A meds service in Blakeney is essential but we don't think it's enough. We want some way of seeing a doctor or nurse in Blakeney, even if it's not at the surgery. We want some form of transport to take us to Kelling or Melton for urgent or specialised appointments. We want well-being clinics in the community. Given how much better off the practice should be if it closes Blakeney Surgery, we think these are the least they can offer.

We will keep fighting to get you all we can.

Please take a look at Blakeney Parish Council's article elsewhere in this issue, 'Blakeney Medical Services', inviting you to write to the ICB and also to attend the Blakeney PC Annual Meeting on 7th March.