

District Cllrs Report April 2024

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.

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.

Housing

NNDC Cabinet has just approved a new Housing Strategy to provide a framework for the delivery of housing to meet the District's need.

A new Housing Allocations Policy will be going out for consultation shortly. This will make the allocation of social housing fairer and hopefully simpler, but you will be able to give us your views.

The Task and Finish Group on finding solutions to reduce homelessness in North Norfolk will be reporting its findings May/June. We've had stimulating discussions with various organisations from the Eastern Landlords Association to Emmaus.

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.

Finance

A new Economic Growth Strategy has been adopted.

Environmental Services

The new waste rounds which started April 8th seem to have gone quite well so far. You can contact Serco on 03301099220 or norfolkwaste@serco.com, or get in touch with me with problems.'

Other news

Blakeney Surgery

The decision whether or not to close Blakeney Surgery will be made on May 7th at a virtual meeting of the Integrated Care Board's Primary Care Commissioning Committee. We have written 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. I am arranging a meeting with BT to talk about mobile coverage in hard to get villages.

Broadband connectivity

I have been in touch with Openreach to ascertain what their plans are for full fibre roll out to the villages which are not connected. It's very difficult to actually get hold of the build teams in the local area so I'm having to work through the Executive Complaints and Escalations Team!