

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.

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 programme to replace property at risk, improve and replace community infrastructure and re-purposing land at risk whilst restoring habitats in our coastal locations. Defences 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. The Council will continue to work proactively to achieve the highest category.

Thank you for reading this Report.

CLLR ANDREW BROWN

6/5/24