

MARCH 2025 DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT FOR CORPUSTY/SAXTHORPE PC

DEVOLUTION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM (LGR)

The debate between the Government (via MHCLG) and both County and District Councils continues. At the time of writing, we do not know if North Norfolk will be split between 2 new unitary councils plus a third Greater Norwich unitary or not. But we are certain that change will happen to replace the current two-tier system either in 2026 or 2027 to our boundaries and councillor numbers. As of now, a district councillor has approximately 2,200 residents, a county councillor 4,400 but this may increase to 8,800 or so after unitarization. Town and Parish Councils are not affected by the changes proposed at the moment.

POSTPONED COUNTY ELECTIONS

The Government has delayed the elections due on 1 May to “help speed up reorganisation”. The next elections will be to select a mayor for a combined mayoral authority for Norfolk and Suffolk in May 2026 which is planned as part of a wider devolution agenda. They hope to have Unitary elections at the same time, but this may need a Commission to change the boundaries which may delay this into 2027.

COUNCIL TAX SETTING

The Council set the council tax for 2025-6 at last month’s budget meeting. Owing to funding cutbacks, we feel compelled to increase by 3% this year to maintain the level of services with just 8% of every pound received with the rest split between County, police, fire and parish precepts.

LOCAL PLAN

The next stage of the development plan for the district is scheduled for 8-11 April (see our website for more details) when the Planning Inspectorate will consider further modifications to the draft Local Plan with our planners. We have been asked to deliver 932 new properties per year, but we are arguing for this to be reduced to 557. We believe it’s not planning which causes a shortage of housing, in fact it’s the lack of affordability. The Government continues to ignore the 1 million homes already with planning consent which have not been built out. This creates pressure to build in unsustainable quotas being rolled out for our area.

MAKE MY HOUSE GREEN

The Council has entered into partnership with Make My House Green to make it easier for people to invest in solar panels and batteries with a £500 discount for everyone applying. An average of £1000 per annum can be saved on energy bills using panels, batteries and an EV charger. For more information enter your details at

www.makemyhousegreen.com/north-norfolk. They are a trusted trader rated excellent on Trustpilot.

NUTRIENT NEUTRALITY

The first planning permission has been passed by the Committee on a small development in Briston using environmental credits off-site in order to neutralize pollution. This is a first for our district and we hope will be the start of many such schemes to unlock sites that have stalled since the Government embargo on new building in certain catchment areas since March 2022.

OMAZE PROMOTION PROPERTY

You may be aware that a property being advertised across the national media in a prize draw at Blakeney worth £6.1 million has been challenged by allegations that it has not been constructed in accordance with consent conditions imposed many years ago. NNDC enforcement officers are investigating to establish the position, and it is being reviewed to determine if any action is justified.

A148 ROAD SAFETY

I was pleased to be involved in a meeting called by our MP Steffan Aquarone on February 18 at High Kelling Village Hall to consider improvements to the main Cromer Rd following the tragic fatal accident last Christmas. It was attended by many local councillors, senior police and highways engineers. A follow up meeting in April has been arranged to consider a strategy for delivering road improvements.

SECOND HOMES COUNCIL TAX

Following negotiations with County we are expecting £1.3 million in the next financial year when we are allowed to charge double council tax on second homes from 1 April. The money must be spent within the year, so we are planning to invest in more temporary homes to meet the requirement to house homeless people. By doing this we anticipate being able to use the funds within the time period and it will cut expenditure on bed and breakfast spending we would otherwise have to meet.

Thank you for taking the time to read this report.

Cllr Andrew Brown

3/3/25