

# Our Corporate Plan Achievements 2024-25



# Corporate Plan

Breckland is a Council that cares, listens, and supports people and businesses within our district. We are proud of our district, and as an organisation we are working hard to make it a place where people and businesses can thrive, inspiring them to live, work, visit or do business here.

Our Corporate Plan sets out what we're going to do to make this happen and how we plan to do this. Through our actions we want to make things better. But we know we can't do this alone, which is why we work together with others to make a greater impact. This includes a commitment to leading our area into a greener future, in partnership with others, so that we - and future generations - can continue to enjoy and benefit from our natural environment.

As a council, we have big ideas and challenge ourselves to come up with new and creative ways to meet the needs of the communities we serve, especially those who need our help the most. We are also an employer that encourages our staff to grow and develop, empowering them to achieve their full potential and deliver for our district

Our priorities for the future are grouped across three key themes:

- **Thriving Places**
- **Inspiring Communities**
- **Working Smarter 2035**

This document outlines just some of the projects and activities we have delivered throughout 2024-25 against these overarching commitments and priorities.



# Thriving Places

***'We will play an active role in creating the right conditions for new and existing local businesses to thrive.'***

- Honouring our district's rich heritage, we secured £1 million in funding and launched the Swaffham Historic Market Town project which has seen a number of buildings undergo improvements as part of the scheme.
- Working collaboratively with partners, we helped secure £20 million LTPFT funding for Thetford and will continue to align this with our Future Breckland Programme.
- To enhance local skills and opportunities we launched our Boost programme through UKSPF to provide improved opportunities for over 150 residents aged between 16-30 years old. In addition, we've supported career days and enabled 30 Skills Boot Camps.
- To tackle housing challenges, we adopted a comprehensive strategy outlining how we will collaborate with stakeholders to boost affordable housing supply, enhance quality and sustainability, and support vulnerable residents with their housing needs.
- To inspire future generations, we arranged for 300 children to visit local businesses as part of National Manufacturing Day. We also worked in partnership with local schools to deliver the Young Enterprise Programme.
- Recognising the needs of the district, we have created a new Rural Business Support service to support our rural business community.
- To help support our local economy and fill empty commercial units, we awarded £50k to 7 new or expanded businesses through our Meanwhile programme.
- To improve the provision of activities for young people, we enabled the development of a new Youth Hub with Attleborough Town Council.
- Working towards greener ways of travel, we have funded feasibility work to help unlock a new walking and cycling route between Watton and Swaffham.
- To increase footfall into our town centres, we worked in Partnership with Norfolk County Council to deliver funded activity as part of the Love Your Market Town initiative. This included treasure trails and craft workshops.
- Using enforcement to protect our local spaces, we issued Fixed Penalty Notices, Environmental Protection Abatement Notices and Community



Protection Notices where required. In addition, we suspended licenses where required and issued formal enforcement notices.

- Continuing our commitment to preserve local heritage, we secured match funding from Historic England for a revised Conservation Area Appraisal, Management Plan and Shop Front Design Guide. We also delivered skills workshops on heritage construction works.
- To support local businesses with job retention, diversification and expansion, we administered £750k of business grant funding which has helped create 37 new jobs and safeguard a further 52.
- Recognising the need to unlock new housing developments we helped to launch the Norfolk Nutrient Mitigation Fund with £10m available for local schemes.
- Continuing our commitment to support the local economy, we distributed £1m of Rural England Prosperity Funding (REPF), which saw a total of £3.2m investment leveraged, supporting 57 Breckland business and community organisations.
- With a targeted approach to increasing footfall in the town centre, we delivered the InThetford Festival with a range of partners.
- To further support housing needs and sustainable growth, we secured £1m Brownfield Funding to unlock affordable homes across the district.
- To support visitors to the town, we completed design, delivery, and installation of Wayfinding signage in Attleborough.
- Working closely with partners, we used £125k of Norfolk Investment Framework funding to deliver a business case and designs for a new state-of-the-art digital and creative centre in Watton. This work also included community and business support to evidence demand, including sessions to help local people improve their IT skills.
- To ensure the best use of high street properties, we obtained approval from our Cabinet to develop a process and start consultation on the new powers of High Street Rental Auctions.
- To ensure compliance and consumer confidence, we rated over 200 businesses in accordance with National Food Hygiene Ratings and Animal Welfare Licensing.
- We installed footfall cameras in our market towns to monitor activity in our towns and improve diversification in our high streets.
- Ending the year strongly, we concluded the delivery of £1.6m UK Shared Prosperity investment which unlocked an additional £3m in additional investment, addressing skills gaps, business support and through the Inspiring Communities programme.



# Inspiring Communities

***'We will help our residents to live safe and healthy lives by playing an active part in local communities.'***

- To provide affordable, nourishing food along with wellbeing support to rural villages across the district, we launched the Pop-up Pantry with support from a range of different partners.
- In response to the need for essential support, our Household Support Fund assisted over 270 households with food, energy, clothing, and other necessities.
- To reduce anti-social behaviour and maintain a visible presence in Thetford, we introduced Safer Street Wardens who actively engage with the public, offering advice and support.
- Working with partners to improve access to vital wellbeing services, we launched The Link, a multi-agency community hub in the heart of Dereham. Service providers based at the site include Norfolk Waveney MIND, DWP, CAB, NHS and Nova Training.
- To empower and uplift the vital work of local community organisations, we awarded over £75,000 in grant funding through our Inspiring Communities Grant Scheme, helping to support projects that make a real difference at the grassroots level.
- Supporting residents facing financial difficulties, we continued to fund access to Debt Advisors in partnership with Citizens Advice.
- Recognizing the importance of health and leisure facilities, we secured £525k of grant funding from the Football Foundation and have started work on the construction of a new 3G football pitch in Thetford. Improvements to leisure facilities in Attleborough are also on track to commence in 2025.
- To support the disposal of waste in a sustainable way, we increased our trade waste customer base to over 480 local businesses.
- To address damp and mould issues in the private rental sector, we secured funding and collaborated with landlords to enhance housing conditions throughout the district as part of our Healthy Homes Project.
- To help tackle homelessness, we secured funding from the Local Authority Housing Fund and purchased 23 homes for use as temporary accommodation.
- We worked closely with local businesses to help them prepare for new food waste legislation.
- To help residents with accessibility, we approved over £3,500 of Community Transport Grants.



- To improve our service provision and reduce the risk of crisis, we're better aligning our Housing & Communities Teams and implementing a programme of service improvements.
- We continued our commitment to tackling health inequalities through a Health & Wellbeing Partnership and Integrated Care System.
- Building on from this further, we've worked with the Woodland Trust to plant 50 trees to commemorate 50 years of District Council's.
- We distributed £26,400 of Kings Coronation Grants to community groups to plant community orchards – totalling over 1,000 trees to 30 different community groups.
- Encouraging a caring approach to our local environment we secured equipment to support community litter picks across the district.
- Through our Mindful Towns initiative, we empowered communities to build resilience and thrive by delivering training sessions on bereavement, social media use, youth well-being, and mental health.
- Towards the end of the year, we expanded the Pop-Up Pantry offering and included new locations across rural communities.
- We employed Resettlement Officers to assist people with settling into new homes, reducing the risk of them becoming homeless again.
- Working in partnership with agencies, we found housing solutions for people leaving prison and other institutions.
- To continue improve the support we offer to homeless households, we implemented a new Housing Allocations Policy to ensure social housing is prioritised for those with the greatest need.
- Through our Inspiring communities programme, we funded the important work of Citizens Advice to offer extended debt and financial advice for those experiencing severe hardship.
- To support biodiversity and carbon reduction, we completed the planting of 2,400 trees at Oxburgh Hall as part of Woodland of Thanks.
- Ensuring a joined-up approach to tackling health and wellbeing challenges, we delivered the Community Network Conference with 30 organisations in attendance.
- Taking a robust approach to anti-social behaviour, we coordinated the deployment of mobile cameras for evidential purposes.
- To help vulnerable residents stay warm throughout the winter, we launched our 'Warm Packs' incentive with support from local retailers.
- We have made 16 Inspiring Communities grants totalling over £70k to support important grass-roots community activity.



# Working Smarter 2035

***'We are a dynamic, innovative organization that embraces new, environmentally friendly ways of working to help us put residents and businesses at the heart of everything we do.'***

- To support our commitment to reducing carbon emissions and promoting sustainable energy use, we secured funding and completed the installation of high-efficiency solar panels at Dereham Leisure Centre.
- To ensure we continue to provide exceptional services that are accessible to all, we have updated key software systems including Planning, Building Control and Land Charges.
- In recognition of our commitment to creating a great workplace that attracts and retains high-calibre staff, we were shortlisted for the LGC Workforce Award.
- We adopted a comprehensive new property strategy to ensure the Council's assets are managed efficiently whilst maximizing value and effectively supporting service delivery.
- To promote the use of electric vehicles and help reduce emissions further, we have installed new EV chargers in our market towns, making sustainable travel more accessible for residents and visitors.
- Recognizing we can play a wider role in helping others reduce their carbon emissions, we've engaged with 39 businesses offering them decarbonization plans, toolkits, case studies and access to grant funding. We also introduced businesses to the Zellar application, providing them with a sustainability coaching platform.
- By directly supporting our residents, we secured new heating solutions for 75 households through the Warm Homes Discount Scheme and ECO4 grant applications—providing financial relief while saving approximately 112 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.
- To improve efficiency and reduce costs, we brought all our planning services in-house.
- Continuing our commitment to ensuring our workforce is inclusive, resilient and forward-thinking, we created development programmes to help develop future leaders.
- As part of our 'Thetford: Net Zero Pathway' we are working to reduce the challenge of reducing greenhouse gases.



- Through our Breckland Cares incentive, our staff have delivered a range of activities to support White Ribbon Week, Pride Month and Carers Week.
- To continue leveraging funding to improve living conditions for residents, we secured £155k grant funding from DLUHC and NCC to deliver housing-related improvement projects.
- To further improve efficiency through technology, we continued to develop our Chatbot to include processes that cover Council Tax, Housing, Benefits and Environmental Services which are available 24 hours a day.
- We continued to use our commercial property portfolio to generate income and capital receipts that contribute to improving service provision across the Council.
- To support businesses in reducing their carbon emissions we secured £50k of investment in new Net-Zero Road mapping.
- In partnership with our waste contractor, we trialled the use of hand-held electric battery powered equipment for ground maintenance tasks.
- We launched a new dedicated food waste collection service for businesses, providing local enterprises with a practical and cost-effective solution to meet new national recycling regulations introduced on 31 March 2025.
- To help promote career opportunities, we attended events such as the Watton Jobs Fair and UEA Careers Fair.
- To help inspire young people to care for the environment, we launched our Breckland 2035 Eco Challenge Programme which engages local schools and the Youth Advisory Board to promote ideas to change behaviours and reduce carbon emissions.
- We continued to take a zero-tolerance approach to fly-tipping by using mobile cameras to help enforce against those that commit offences.
- Helping to share ideas and innovation whilst also generating income, we provided HR consultancy services to other councils.
- We achieved the highest audit rating of 'Substantial' for the audit assurance review of Climate and Sustainability.'
- Building on from this, we continued to reduce our own carbon footprint resulting in an improved Display Energy Certificate for our offices.

