

ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENTS

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.

2025-26



Our Corporate Plan Achievements 2025-26

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**



Thriving Places

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

- To help restore our rich local history, we allocated £250k to repair 7 historic buildings as part of the Swaffham Historic Market Town Programme. As part of that programme, we also delivered 8 community engagement and learning events with over 800 attendees.
- Continuing our commitment to support the local economy, we allocated £519,453 of UK Shared Prosperity Funding, focussing on local priorities benefiting businesses, improving employability & skills, investing in our towns and villages and building stronger communities. This investment has unlocked a further £1.9M of public and private sector funding, bringing the total investment into Breckland's rural economy to £2.4M.
- To improve the future of our high streets, we continued our work with NCC and supported with funding to progress pre-feasibility work to make improvements to the Market Place in Dereham.
- To help shape the future of Thetford, we led & enabled Thetford's Pride in Place Board - from engagement to delivery, securing input from 1,000+ residents, submitting an early 10-year regeneration plan, and unlocking £350k for priority projects.
- To support our local retailers, we awarded c£30,000 to repair and redecorate their frontages, helping to enhance the look and feel of our town centres, while preserving local heritage and character and supporting businesses to thrive.
- Ensuring a boost in local skills, we funded and enabled more than 100 people and students to take part in hands-on heritage training, developing traditional building and conservation skills through practical workshops.
- Building on our commitment to support the high street, we offered a further 9 businesses a Re-Open Grant. A total of £64,000 has been invested to allow a new business venture or enabled growth, while filling empty commercial buildings on our high street.



- To highlight the career opportunities in our local Manufacturing industries on National Manufacturing Day by organising 270 local primary school pupils to visit Boniface, Peerless Plastics and Warren Services.
- To create activity and footfall in our market towns, nine projects received grants totalling more than £20,000 through the Breckland Council and Norfolk County Council's 'Love your Market Town' initiative. Events included markets, treasure hunts and walking trails.
- Working with Norfolk County Council, we helped fund the GO Digital programme, which supports small and medium-sized businesses to improve their digital skills, online presence and use of technology. So far, the programme has delivered 88 business advice sessions and awarded 40 digital improvement grants to help local businesses grow and become more digitally capable.
- In Thetford, we celebrated historic links with the Duleep Singh family through the Festival of Thetford and Punjab. Breckland Council supported the event with £5,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to help deliver a weekend of community and cultural activities.
- We supported 20 micro and small businesses to access our small business network support scheme, providing subsidised membership to the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).
- Ensuring our commitment to local economy, we supported 16 businesses with Breckland Business Growth or Start Up Grants totalling £285,000 to help rural businesses. This investment has created new jobs, safeguarded existing ones, improved productivity, introduced new technology processes, and launched new products or services. Funded through Rural England Prosperity Funding, this public support is projected to unlock an additional £1,104,341 in private sector funding, bringing the total investment into Breckland's rural economy to £1.4 million.
- To support our amazing rural areas, we have offered 5 Community Grants totalling almost £27,000 from our allocation of the Rural England Prosperity Fund. The grants are helping fund play equipment, create sensory rooms and re-thatch a community bus shelter.
- To support young people with creativity, digital skills and spatial awareness, we collaborated with the Nicholas Hammond Academy to empower students to reimagine and digitally transform Swaffham using the Minecraft computer game.



- To ensure our continuous support to new and existing businesses, we secured 24 new lease agreements and 29 lease renewals across our property portfolio which has also helped generate income to keep vital services going.
- With the future of high streets in mind, we continued working with NCC to support detailed design work and further consultation/feedback with businesses and residents to inform designs for Watton Middle Street pedestrianisation.
- Continuing our commitment to skills and heritage, we secured an additional £56K from partners including The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Volunteer It Yourself, and Boost to restore the Town Pound in Swaffham. The project supported up to 20 young people at risk of unemployment to gain City & Guilds qualifications, develop practical trade and employability skills, and improve their career prospects while helping to preserve an important historic building in the town.
- To ensure key strategic assets remain within local control, we've worked with Town Councils to transfer the ownership of town centre car parks.
- Recognising the need for further education in Thetford, we've worked with West Suffolk College to begin an exciting new project with a vision to build an educational campus in Thetford. Through a joint funding agreement and with funding supporting from the Pride in Place programme, design work is due to commence in early 26-27.
- We continued to use our commercial property portfolio to generate income and capital receipts that contribute to improving service provision across the Council.
- In setting out our clear vision for business growth and higher-paid jobs for the regions, we commenced construction of a new flagship building upon land at Snetterton for Ansible Motion who will be relocating its headquarters and building a state-of-the-art simulation centre. This represents a c£13m investment in the location.
- To support our local high streets and generate important income through commercial property lettings, we achieved 100% occupancy of the Breckland Business Centre in Dereham and the Riverside scheme in Thetford.
- Continuing our commitment to enable our market towns to thrive, we led, facilitated and supported partnership groups including Attleborough Development Partnership, Dereham Action Partnership, Greater Thetford Partnership, 5 Market Towns, Future Breckland and Business Forums.



Inspiring Communities

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

- To continue our commitment to tackling anti-social behaviour, our Safer Street Wardens now cover all our market towns and have provided over 1000 hours of visible patrols with over 200 formal warnings issued for littering and breaching Public Spaces Protection Orders (PSPO).
- In order to support vital community-led projects, we distributed £82,695 in grant funding to support incentives that address local priorities. In addition, we provided £32,295 in match funding for community incentives.
- To ensure local housing needs are met, we enabled the delivery of over 160 affordable homes to be completed prioritising social rented tenure, 1-bed and 4-bed accommodation.
- Building on from this, we also enabled 4 all-affordable new schemes which will provide over 280 new affordable homes, including an additional 200 above and beyond policy requirement.
- Working with our partners Parkwood Project Management and Lex Leisure, with funding from the Football Foundation, we delivered a brand new 3G football pitch in Thetford to improve local sports facilities and access to sport.
- To boost local sports provision further, we started work on the Attleborough Leisure project which will see new and improved facilities open for public use including a new fitness suite, sports studio, changing rooms and a 3G football pitch as part of a c£4m investment.
- We worked with Norfolk County Council to provide a Supported Living Scheme in Swaffham for adults with additional needs to live independently, confidently and as part of their community.
- To enable commemoration events that strengthen civic pride and community connection, we distributed £12,000 to towards activities to mark VJ Day 80.
- By working collaboratively with Sport England and Active Norfolk, the Council is now positioned to co-design long term, community led solutions that address local barriers



to physical activity. This partnership also creates the opportunity to secure over £1m of investment to help residents become more active, strengthening community wellbeing across Breckland.

- To help create environments where people of all ages can live healthy, connected, and independent lives we joined the national network of Age-friendly Communities, a national movement supported by the Centre for Ageing Better and linked to the World Health Organisation's global age-friendly initiative.
- To help tackle local issues we launched the Community Alcohol Partnership in Thetford – addressing alcohol-related harm through joint action with retailers, schools, police, and community partners.
- Building on from this we also launched Together For Dereham – a collaborative initiative tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) and underlying health inequalities, helping improve neighbourhood safety and wellbeing.
- To provide vital support to our communities through the Breckland Health and Wellbeing Partnership (HWP), using investment from Norfolk Public Health we delivered projects to help prevent homelessness, increase physical activity, reduce serious violence, improve wellbeing, prevent falls and ensure children have access to good nutrition and safe activities during school holidays.
- To ensure health and hygiene standards we completed over 750 food and private water supply inspections.
- Working collaboratively with a number of partners we provided support to over 2,800 residents at The Link in Dereham which provides early help, practical support, and pathways to services for those facing hardship.
- Over the course of the year, approximately 100 new affordable dwellings have been granted planning permission to unlock further housing requirements.
- In recognition of our commitment to animal welfare, we were awarded our third consecutive Platinum Award for Stray Dog Services from the RSPCA which follows on from 5 previous Gold Awards. We also received a Gold Award for Kennelling Services for Lost & Stray Dogs with our Licencing Officer receiving a Special Recognition award.
- To keep our communities clean and tidy, we dealt with over 140 incidents of fly-tipping with 37 Fixed Penalty Notices issues. We also dealt with 237 cases of abandoned vehicles.
- To increase access to services and reducing social isolation, we distributed £4,000 in Community Transport Grants.



- Continuing our commitment to ensure healthy lives across our district, we've continued to drive and coordinate the Health and Wellbeing Partnership (30 partners) and the Community Network Forum (242 members), ensuring joined-up action across the system.
- Listening to local concerns, we introduced a Public Spaces Protection Order in Dereham to help tackle anti-social behaviour.
- Continuing our commitment to tackling homelessness, we have significantly reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation through a range of targeted initiatives. Alongside this, we have improved the quality and standards of temporary accommodation. As part of a service restructure, we have also introduced new roles to strengthen case triage and provide dedicated support in helping households move on from temporary accommodation into more suitable, long-term homes.
- To ensure resilience and emergency planning within our communities, we have increased the number of emergency rest centres and worked with Town and Parish Councils to assist them in developing their own community plans. This will enable them to have robust plans in place to respond and recover from local emergencies.
- To help our resident with their wellbeing, we continued to deliver and grow our Mindful Towns and Villages initiative improving mental health awareness and creating more compassionate communities.
- To provide support to rural households we expanded our Pop-Up Pantry service. The service which is funded by Breckland Council and Norfolk Community Foundation and delivered by Citizens Advice Diss & Thetford, provides low-cost food and essentials to rural communities and now reaches new locations in Old Buckenham, Shipdham, Swanton Morley, North Lopham and Narborough.
- To empower community groups to make a difference, we launched a new £100,000 grant scheme to support projects which enhance the district and meet the needs of local communities.
- In recognition of our commitment in responding to domestic abuse, we were awarded Gold DAHA Accreditation- an important benchmark for housing providers aligned with the government's Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy.
- To improve living standards, we delivered 168 Disabled Facilities Grant projects for disabled residents and are currently working on a further 77 homes. These adaptations help people continue living safely and independently at home.



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 improve service delivery, we modernised customer access channels through the launch of our new telephony and AI platform (Puzzel), which provides 24/7 access, increases self-service and convenience whilst freeing up officer capacity for more complex cases.
- To support other local authorities and generate income, we provided HR services and delivered training to external organisations.
- Ensuring our corporate commitment to sustainability, we worked with our partners Parkwood Project Management to deliver the installation of solar panels at Breckland Leisure Centre in Thetford using 400k in grant funding from Sport England which will reduce the building's carbon emissions by nearly 38 tonnes per year.
- To improve our customer service provision and efficiency, we enhanced automation and digital integration by expanding our chatbot functionality across all services.
- To ensure our local businesses dispose of their waste in a sustainable way, we expanded our trade waste scheme which now has 598 customers with 1089 waste bins in use.
- Building on from this, we have also supported our customers to ensure they meet the new legislative requirements of 'Simpler Recycling' with 88 businesses now using our service to collect food waste which has seen 107 tonnes of food collected.
- Continuing our commitment in supporting the Armed Forces, we launched the Armed Forces Community Fund, an £11,500 scheme funding organisations and groups to deliver activity that supports, celebrates, and champions the armed forces community across the district.
- To support environmental projects across the district, we awarded £11,500 in grant funding to promote composting, recycling, and textile reuse.
- To help look after our local environment and to keep community spaces clean, we supported 30 community litterpicks.



- Ensuring the highest standards of maintenance across our property portfolio, all our buildings remain 100% compliant with regulations. This includes all EPC ratings.
- To enhance customer communication and experience we introduced SMS functionality and a new call-back service during our busiest periods.
- To better align key services and ensure a collaborative approach to help vulnerable residents, we restructured our Housing and Communities Team to ensure an improved customer journey. To build on this further, new software is being introduced to ensure the early identification of potential homelessness allowing us to intervene at the earliest opportunity.
- Through our Breckland Cares incentive, our staff have delivered a range of activities to support Armed Forces Day, White Ribbon Week, Pride Month and Carers Week.
- To strengthen our commitment to lowering carbon footprint, we supported one of our commercial tenants with their aspiration to install of Solar panels – which will save MPC Ltd £10,548 which could result in savings of £370,000 over the 20-year life span of the solar panels.
- To ensure financial efficiency, we have successfully moved 151 commercial property tenants onto a direct debit system, saving officer time and ensuring consistency of rent payments.
- Recognising the need for accessible services, we helped to facilitate a temporary banking hub and plans for a permanent location in Thetford.
- Working with Norfolk County Council, we funded the GO Digital Support Package to over 80 small businesses, providing advice and funding.
- To support the reduction of our carbon emissions, we introduced a new Electric Car lease scheme to encourage our staff to switch to cleaner methods of transport.
- Using digital technology and AI we created the Future Norfolk Website to support the public consultation phase of Local Government Reorganisation, online housing triage forms, online payments for replacement bins and other services.
- To address issues in the private rental sector, we served 167 notices to fix hazardous housing conditions and make homes safer. We also took strong action against criminal landlords, securing fines of more than £94,000.
- Following the installation of solar panels, we worked with Lex Leisure to install a new Battery Storage Energy System with funding being provided from Sport England's Swimming Pool Support Fund. This will enable 30-40% of all energy being used at Thetford and Dereham Leisure Centres to come from a renewable source.

